PIANO PLAYING
With
PIANO QUESTIONS
Answered by
JOSEF HOFMANN

200

PIANO PLAYING
WITH
PIANO QUESTIONS
ANSWERED

Josef Hofmann

PIANO PLAYING
WITH
PIANO QUESTIONS
ANSWERED

BY

JOSEF HOFMANN

PHILADELPHIA
THEODORE PRESSER CO.
1920

F

PIANO PLAYING

A LITTLE BOOK OF SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS

BY

JOSEF HOFMANN

ILLUSTRATED

PHILADELPHIA
THEODORE PRESSER CO.
1920

Copyright, 1907, by The Curtis Publishing Company
Copyright, 1908, by Doubleday, Page & Co.
Copyright, 1920, by Theo. Presser Co.
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

CONSTANTIN VON STERNBERG

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Foreword	vii
The Piano and Its Player	3
General Rules	19
Correct Touch and Technic	34
The Use of the Pedal	41
Playing "In Style"	49
How Rubinstein Taught Me to Play	57
Indispensables in Pianistic Success	70

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Josef Hofmann	*Frontispiece*
	FACING PAGE
The Position of the Hand	20
Incorrect Way to Play an Octave	28
Correct Way to Play an Octave	28
Incorrect Position of the Little Finger	36
Correct Position of the Little Finger	36
Incorrect Position of Thumb	38
Correct Position of Thumb	38
Incorrect Position of the Feet	42
Correct Position of the Feet on the Pedal	42
Anton Rubinstein	57
How Rubinstein Taught Me to Play	60

A FOREWORD

THIS little book purposes to present a general view of artistic piano-playing and to offer to young students the results of such observations as I have made in the years of my own studies, as well as of the experiences which my public activity has brought me.

It is, of course, only the concrete, the material side of piano-playing that can be dealt with here—that part of it which aims to reproduce in tones what is plainly stated in the printed lines of a composition. The other, very much subtler part of piano-playing, draws upon and, indeed, depends upon imagination, refinement of sensibility, and spiritual vision, and endeavours to convey to an audience what the composer has, consciously or unconsciously, hidden *between* the lines. That almost entirely psychic side of piano-playing eludes treatment in literary form and must, therefore, not be

looked for in this little volume. It may not be amiss, however, to dwell a moment upon these elusive matters of æsthetics and conception, though it be only to show how far apart they are from technic.

When the material part, the technic, has been completely acquired by the piano student, he will see a limitless vista opening up before him, disclosing the vast field of artistic interpretation. In this field the work is largely of an analytical nature and requires that intelligence, spirit, and sentiment, supported by knowledge and æsthetic perception, form a felicitous union to produce results of value and dignity. It is in this field that the student must learn to perceive the invisible something which unifies the seemingly separate notes, groups, periods, sections, and parts into an organic whole. The spiritual eye for this invisible something is what musicians have in mind when they speak of "reading between the lines"—which is at once the most fascinating and most difficult task of the interpretative artist; for, it is just between the lines where, in literature as in music, the soul of a work of art lies hid-

den. To play its notes, even to play them correctly, is still very far from doing justice to the life and soul of an artistic composition.

I should like to reiterate at this point two words which I used in the second paragraph: the words "consciously or unconsciously." A brief comment upon this alternative may lead to observations which may throw a light upon the matter of reading between the lines, especially as I am rather strongly inclining toward the belief in the "unconscious" side of the alternative.

I believe that every composer of talent (not to speak of genius) in his moments of creative fever has given birth to thoughts, ideas, designs that lay altogether beyond the reach of his conscious will and control. In speaking of the products of such periods we have hit upon exactly the right word when we say that the composer "has surpassed himself." For, in saying this we recognise that the act of surpassing one's self precludes the control of the self. A critical, sober overseeing of one's work during the period of creation is unthinkable, for it is the fancy and the imagination that carries one

on and on, will-lessly, driftingly, until the totality of the tonal apparition is completed and mentally as well as physically absorbed.

Now, inasmuch as the composer's conscious will takes little or no part in the creating of the work, it seems to follow that he is not, necessarily, an absolute authority as to the "only correct way" of rendering it. Pedantic adherence to the composer's own conception is, to my mind, not an unassailable maxim. The composer's way of rendering his composition may not be free from certain predilections, biases, mannerisms, and his rendition may also suffer from a paucity of pianistic experience. It seems, therefore, that to do justice to the work itself is of far greater importance than a slavish adherence to the composer's conception.

Now, to discover what it is, intellectually or emotionally, that hides itself between the lines; how to conceive and how to interpret it—that must ever rest with the reproductive artist, provided that he possesses not only the spiritual vision which entitles him to an individual conception, but also the technical skill to express what this individual conception (aided by

imagination and analysis) has whispered to him. Taking these two conditions for granted, his interpretations — however punctiliously he adhere to the text—will and must be a reflex of his breeding, education, temperament, disposition; in short, of all the faculties and qualities that go to make up his personality. And as these personal qualities differ between players, their interpretations must, necessarily, differ in the same measure.

In some respects the performance of a piece of music resembles the reading of a book aloud to some one. If a book should be read to us by a person who does not understand it, would it impress us as true, convincing, or even credible? Can a dull person, by reading them to us, convey bright thoughts intelligibly? Even if such a person were drilled to read with outward correctness that of which he cannot fathom the meaning, the reading could not seriously engage our attention, because the reader's want of understanding would be sure to effect a lack of interest in us. Whatever is said to an audience, be the speech literary or musical, must be a free and individual expres-

sion, governed only by general æsthetic laws or rules; it must be free to be artistic, and it must be individual to have vital force. Traditional conceptions of works of art are "canned goods," unless the individual happens to concur with the traditional conception, which, at best, is very rarely the case and does not speak well for the mental calibre of the easily contented treader of the beaten path.

We know how precious a thing is freedom. But in modern times it is not only precious, it is also costly; it is based upon certain possessions. This holds as good in life as in art. To move comfortably with freedom in life requires money; freedom in art requires a sovereign mastery of technic. The pianist's artistic bank-account upon which he can draw at any moment is his technic. We do not gauge him by it as an artist, to be sure, but rather by the use he makes of it; just as we respect the wealthy according to the way in which they use their money. And as there are wealthy people that are vulgar, so there may be pianists who, despite the greatest technic, are not artists. Still, while money is to a gentleman perhaps no

more than a rather agreeable adjunct, technic is to the pianist's equipment an indispensable necessity.

To assist young students in acquiring this necessity, the following articles were written for *The Ladies' Home Journal,* and for this form I have gone over them and corrected and amplified. I sincerely hope that they will help my young colleagues to become free as piano-playing musicians first, and that this, in its turn and with the help of good fortune in their career, will bring them the means to make them equally free in their daily life.

JOSEF HOFMANN.

PIANO PLAYING

THE PIANO AND ITS PLAYER

THE first requisite for one who wishes to become a musicianly and artistic pianist is a precise knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of the piano as an instrument. Having properly recognised them both, having thus staked off a stretch of ground for his activity, he must explore it to discover all the resources for tonal expression that are hidden within its pale. With these resources, however, he must be contented. He must, above all, never strive to rival the orchestra. For there is no necessity to attempt anything so foolish and so futile, since the gamut of expressions inherent to the piano is quite extensive enough to vouchsafe artistic results of the very highest order, provided, of course, that this gamut is used in an artistic manner.

THE PIANO AND THE ORCHESTRA

From one point of view the piano can claim to be the equal of the orchestra; namely, in so far as it is—no less than the orchestra—the exponent of a specific branch of music which, complete by itself, reposes upon a literature exclusively its own and of a type so distinguished that only the orchestra can claim to possess its peer. The great superiority of the literature of the piano over that of any other single instrument has, to my knowledge, never been disputed. I think it is equally certain that the piano grants to its players a greater freedom of expression than any other instrument; greater — in certain respects — than even the orchestra, and very much greater than the organ, which, after all, lacks the intimate, personal element of "touch" and the immediateness of its variegated results.

In dynamic and colouristic qualities, on the other hand, the piano cannot bear comparison with the orchestra; for in these qualities it is very limited indeed. The prudent player will not go beyond these limits. The utmost that

the pianist can achieve in the way of colour may be likened to what the painters call "monochrome." For in reality the piano, like any other instrument, has only one colour; but the artistic player can subdivide the colour into an infinite number and variety of shades. The virtue of a specific charm, too, attaches as much to the piano as to other instruments, though, perhaps, in a lesser degree of sensuousness than to some others. Is it because of this lesser sensuous charm that the art of the piano is considered the chastest of all instruments? I am rather inclined to think that it is, partly at least, due to this chastity that it "wears" best, that we can listen longer to a piano than to other instruments, and that this chastity may have had a reflex action upon the character of its unparagoned literature.

For this literature, though, we have to thank the pianists themselves, or, speaking more precisely, we are indebted to the circumstance that the piano is the only single instrument capable of conveying the complete entity of a composition. That melody, bass, harmony, figuration, polyphony, and the most intricate contrapun-

tal devices can—by skilful hands—be rendered simultaneously and (to all intents and purposes) completely on the piano has probably been the inducement which persuaded the great masters of music to choose it as their favourite instrument.

It may be mentioned at this point that the piano did not have the effect of impairing the orchestration of the great composers—as some musical wiseacres assert from time to time—for they have written just as fine works for a variety of other instruments, not to speak of their symphonies. Thus has, for instance, the most substantial part of the violin literature been contributed by piano-players (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruch, Saint-Saëns, Tschaikowski, and many others). As to the literature of the orchestra, it came almost exclusively from those masters whose only, or chiefest, medium of musical utterance was the piano. Highly organised natures, as they were, they liked to dress their thoughts, sometimes, in the colour splendour of the orchestra. Looking at the depth of their piano works, however, at their sterling merit, at their

poetry, I feel that even a refined musical nature may find lifelong contentment in the piano—despite its limitations—if, as I said before, the artist keeps within its boundaries and commands its possibilities. For it is, after all, not so very little that the piano has to offer. It is both governed and manipulated by one and the same mind and person; its mechanism is so fine and yet so simple as to make its tone response quite as direct as that of any other stringed instrument; it admits of the thoroughly personal element of touch; it requires no auxiliary instruments (for even in the Concerto the orchestra is not a mere accompanist but an equal partner, as the name "Concerto" implies); its limitations are not as bad as those of some other instruments or of the voice; it outweighs these limitations very fairly by the vast wealth of its dynamic and touch varieties. Considering all these and many other points of merit, I think that a musician may be pretty well satisfied with being a pianist. His realm is in more than one respect smaller than that of the conductor, to be sure, but on the other hand the conductor loses many lovely moments

of sweet intimacy which are granted to the pianist when, world-oblivious and alone with his instrument he can commune with his innermost and best self. Consecrated moments, these, which he would exchange with no musician of any other type and which wealth can neither buy nor power compel.

THE PIANO AND THE PLAYER

Music makers are, like the rest of mankind, not free from sin. On the whole, however, I think that the transgressions of pianists against the canons of art are less grave and less frequent than those of other music makers; perhaps, because they are — usually — better grounded as musicians than are singers and such players of other instruments as the public places on a par with the pianists I have in mind. But, while their sins may be less in number and gravity—let it be well understood that the pianists are no saints. Alas, no! It is rather strange, though, that their worst misdeeds are induced by that very virtue of the piano of requiring no auxiliary instruments, of being independent. If it were not so; if the pianist

were compelled always to play in company with other musicians, these other players might at times differ with him as to conception, tempo, etc., and their views and wishes should have to be reckoned with, for the sake of both equilibrium and—sweet peace.

Left entirely to himself, however, as the pianist usually is in his performances, he sometimes yields to a tendency to move altogether too freely, to forget the deference due to the composition and its creator, and to allow his much-beloved "individuality" to glitter with a false and presumptuous brightness. Such a pianist does not only fail in his mission as an interpreter but he also misjudges the possibilities of the piano. He will, for instance, try to produce six *forte-s* when the piano has not more than three to give, all told, except at a sacrifice of its dignity and its specific charm.

The extremest contrasts, the greatest *forte* and the finest *piano,* are given factors determined by the individual piano, by the player's skill of touch, and by the acoustic properties of the hall. These given factors the pianist must bear in mind, as well as the limitations of the

piano as to colour, if he means to keep clear of dilettanteism and charlatanry. A nice appreciation of the realm over which he rules, as to its boundaries and possibilities, must be the supreme endeavour of every sovereign—hence also of every sovereign musician.

Now, I hear it so often said of this and that pianist that "he plays with *so* much feeling" that I cannot help wondering if he does not, sometimes at least, play with "*so* much feeling" where it is not in the least called for and where "*so* much feeling" constitutes a decided trespass against the æsthetic boundaries of the composition. My apprehension is usually well founded, for the pianist that plays *everything* "with so much feeling" is an artist in name only, but in reality a sentimentalist, if not a vulgar sensationalist or a ranter upon the keyboard. What sane pianist would, for instance, attempt to play a cantilena with the same appealing sensuousness as the most mediocre 'cellist can do with the greatest ease? Yet many pianists attempt it; but since they are fully aware that they can never attain such ends by legitimate, artistic means, they make either the

accompaniment or the rhythm, if not the phrasing, bear the brunt of their palpable dilettanteism. Of such illusory endeavours I cannot warn too strongly, for they are bound to destroy the organic relation of the melody to its auxiliaries and to change the musical "physiognomy" of a piece into a—"grimace." This fault reveals that the pianist's spirit—of adventure—is too willing, but the flesh—of the fingers and their technic—too weak.

The artistic and the dilettantic manners of expression must be sharply differentiated. They differ, principally, as follows: the artist knows and feels how far the responsiveness of his instrument, at any particular part of his piece, will allow him to go without violating æsthetics, and without stepping outside of the nature of his instrument. He shapes his rendition of the piece accordingly and practises wise economy in the use of force and in the display of feeling. As to feeling, *per se,* it is the ripe product of a multitude of æsthetic processes which the moment creates and develops; but the artist will keep this product from asserting itself until he has complied with every re-

quirement of artistic *workmanship*; until he has, so to speak, provided a cleanly covered and fully set table upon which these matters of "feeling" appear as finishing, decorative touches, say, as flowers.

The dilettante, on the other hand, does not consume any time by thinking and planning; he simply "goes for" his piece and, without bothering about workmanship or squirming around it as best he may, he rambles off into —"feeling," which in his case consists of naught but vague, formless, aimless, and purely sensuous sentimentality. His accompaniment drowns the melody, his rhythm goes on a sympathetic strike, dynamic and other artistic properties become hysterical; no matter, he—"feels"! He builds a house in which the cellar is under the roof and the garret in the basement.

Let it be said in extenuation of such a player that he is not always and seldom wholly to blame for his wrong-doing. Very often he strays from the path of musical rectitude because of his misplaced trust in the judgment of others, which causes him to accept and follow advice

in good faith, instead of duly considering its source. For, under certain conditions, the advice of even a connoisseur may be wrong. Many professional and well-equipped critics, for instance, fall into the bad habit of expecting that a pianist should tell all he knows in every piece he plays, whether the piano does or does not furnish the opportunities for displaying all his qualities. They expect him to show strength, temperament, passion, poise, sentiment, repose, depth, and so forth, in the first piece on his programme. He must tell his whole story, present himself at once as a "giant" or "Titan" of the piano, though the piece may call for naught but tenderness. With this demand, or the alternative of a "roasting," public artists are confronted rather frequently. Nor is this, perhaps, as much the fault of the critic as of the conditions under which they must write. From my own experience and that of others I know that the critics in large cities are so overburdened with work during the season that they have seldom time to listen to more than one piece out of a whole recital programme. After such a mere sample they form

their opinions—so momentous for the career of a young pianist—and if this one piece happened to offer no opportunities to the pianist to show himself as the "great" So-and-so, why, then he is simply put down as one of the "littlefellows." It is no wonder that such conditions tempt many young aspirants to public renown to resort to æsthetic violence in order to make sure of "good notices"; to use power where it is not called for; to make "feeling" ooze from every pore; to double, treble the tempo or vacillate it out of all rhythm; to violate the boundaries of both the composition and the instrument—and all this for no other purpose than to show as quickly as possible that the various qualities are "all there." These conditions produce what may be called the pianistic nouveau-riche or parvenu, who practises the vices of the dilettante without, however, the mitigating excuse of ignorance or a lack of training.

THE PIANIST AND THE COMPOSITION

As the piano, so has also every composition its limitations as to the range of its emotions

and their artistic expression. The hints in this direction I threw out before may now be amplified by discussing a very common error which underlies the matter of conception. It is the error of inferring the conception of a composition *from the name of its composer*; of thinking that Beethoven has to be played thus and Chopin thus. No error could be greater!

True, every great composer has his own style, his habitual mode of thought development, his personality revealing lines. But it is equally true that the imagination of all great composers was strong enough to absorb them as completely in their own creation as the late Pygmalion was absorbed in his Galatea, and to lure them, for the time being, completely away from their habits of thought and expression; they become the willing servants of the new creature of their own fancy. Thus we find some of Beethoven's works as romantic and fanciful as any of Schumann's or Chopin's could be, while some of the latter's works show at times a good deal of Beethovenish classicity. It is, therefore, utterly wrong to approach

every work of Beethoven with the preconceived idea that it must be "deep" and "majestic," or, if the work be Chopin's, that it must run over with sensuousness and "feeling." How would such a style of rendition do, for instance, for the Polonaise op. 53, or even for the little one in A, op. 40, No. 1? On the other hand, how would the stereotype, academic manner of playing Beethoven suit his Concerto in G—that poetic presage of Chopin?

Every great master has written some works that are, and some that are not, typical of himself. In the latter cases the master's identity reveals itself only to an eye that is experienced enough to detect it in the smaller, more minute traits of his style. Such delicate features, however, must be left in their discreet nooks and niches; they must not be clumsily dragged into the foreground for the sake of a traditional rendition of the piece. That sort of "reverence" is bound to obliterate all the peculiarities of the particular, non-typical composition. It is not reverence, but fetichism. Justice to the composer means justice to his works; to every work in particular. And this justice we cannot

learn from the reading of his biography, but by regarding every one of his works as a separate and complete entity; as a perfect, organic whole of which we must study the general character, the special features, the form, the manner of design, the emotional course, and the trend of thought. Much more than by his biography we will be helped, in forming our conception, by comparing the work in hand with others of the same master, though the comparison may disclose just as many differences of style as it may show similarities.

The worship of names, the unquestioning acquiescence in traditional conceptions—those are not the principles which will lead an artist to come into his own. It is rather a close examination of every popular notion, a severe testing of every tradition by the touchstone of self-thinking that will help an artist to find himself and to see, what he does see, with his own eyes.

Thus we find that—in a certain constructive meaning—even the reverence for the composer is not without boundaries; though these boundary lines are drawn here only to secure the

widest possible freedom for their work. Goethe's great word expresses most tersely what I mean:

> Outwardly limited,
> Boundless to inward.

GENERAL RULES

SUCCESSFUL piano-playing, if it cannot be entirely acquired by some very simple rules, can, at least, be very much helped by what will seem to some as contributing causes so slight as to be hardly worth notice. Still, they are immensely valuable, and I will endeavour to set down a few.

The Value of the Morning Hour above any other time is not generally appreciated. The mental freshness gained from sleep is a tremendous help. I go so far as to say play away for an hour, or a half hour even, before breakfast. But before you touch the piano let me suggest one very prosaic little hint: wash the keyboard as clean as you did your hands. Eating always tastes best from a clean table. Just so with the piano: you cannot do clean work on an unclean keyboard.

Now, as to Practice: Let me suggest that you never practise more than an hour, or, at

the most, two hours, at a stretch—according to your condition and strength. Then go out and take a walk, and think no more of music. This method of mental unhitching, so to speak, is absolutely necessary in order that the newly acquired results of your work may—unconsciously to yourself—mature in your mind and get, as it were, into your flesh and blood. That which you have newly learned must become affixed to your entire organism, very much like the picture on a photographic plate is developed and affixed by the silver bath. If you allow Nature no time for this work the result of your previous efforts will vanish and you will have to begin all over again with your—photographing. Yes, photographing! For every acoustic or tone picture is, through the agency of the ear, photographed in the brain, and the whole occupation of the pianist consists in the reproduction of the previously received impressions through the fingers, which, with the help of the instrument, retranslate the pictures into audible tones.

After every half hour make a pause until you feel rested. Five minutes will often be suf-

The Position of the Hand

ficient. Follow the example of the painter, who closes his eyes for a few moments in order to obtain upon reopening them a fresh color impression.

A Valuable Little Hint Here, if you will allow me: Watch well that you actually hear every tone you mean to produce. Every missing tone will mean a blotch upon your photographic plate in the brain. Each note must be, not mentally but physically, heard, and to this imperative requirement your speed must ever subordinate itself. It is not at all necessary to practise loudly in order to foster the permanence of impressions. Rather let an inward tension take the place of external force. It will engage, sympathetically, your hearing just as well.

As to the Theory—great energy, great results—I prefer my amended version: great energy, restrained power and moderate manifestation of it. Prepare the finger for great force, imagine the tone as being strong, and yet strike moderately. Continuous loud playing makes our playing coarse. On the other hand, continuous soft playing will blur the tone picture in

our mind and cause us soon to play insecurely and wrongly. From time to time we should, of course, practise loudly so as to develop physical endurance. But for the greater part of practice I recommend playing with restrained power. And, incidentally, your neighbours will thank you for it, too.

Do Not Practise Systematically, or "methodically," as it is sometimes called. Systematism is the death of spontaneousness, and spontaneousness is the very soul of art. If you play every day at the same time the same sequence of the same studies and the same pieces, you may acquire a certain degree of skill, perhaps, but the spontaneity of your rendition will surely be lost. Art belongs to the realm of emotional manifestations, and it stands to reason that a systematic exploiting of our emotional nature must blunt it.

With Regard to Finger Exercises: Do not let them be too frequent or too long—at the most a half hour a day. A half hour daily, kept up for a year, is enough for any one to learn to play one's exercises. And if one can play them why should one keep everlastingly on

playing them? Can anybody explain, without reflecting upon one's sanity, why one should persist in playing them? I suggest to use these exercises as " preliminary warmers " (as practised in engines). As soon as the hands have become warm and elastic, or pliable—" played in," as we pianists say—drop the exercises and repeat them for the same purpose the next morning, if you will. They can be successfully substituted, however. As compositions they are but lukewarm water. If you will dip your hands, instead, for five minutes into hot water you will follow my own method and find it just as efficacious.

A Rule for Memory Exercises: If you wish to strengthen the receptivity and retentiveness of your memory you will find the following plan practical: Start with a short piece. Analyse the form and manner of its texture. Play the piece a number of times very exactly with the music before you. Then stop playing for several hours and try to trace the course of ideas mentally in the piece. Try to hear the piece inwardly. If you have retained some parts refill the missing places by repeated read-

ing of the piece, away from the piano. When next you go to the piano—after several hours, remember—try to play the piece. Should you still get "stuck" at a certain place take the sheet music, but play only that place (several times, if necessary), and then begin the piece over again, as a test, if you have better luck this time with those elusive places. If you still fail resume your silent reading of the piece away from the piano. Under no circumstances skip the unsafe place for the time being, and proceed with the rest of the piece. By such forcing of the memory you lose the logical development of your piece, tangle up your memory and injure its receptivity. Another observation in connection with memorising may find a place here. When we study a piece we—unconsciously—associate in our mind a multitude of things with it which bear not the slightest relation upon it. By these "things" I mean not only the action of the piano, light or heavy, as it may be, but also the colour of its wood, the colour of the wall paper, discoloration of the ivory on some key of the piano, the pictures on the walls, the angle at which the piano stands

to the architectural lines of the room, in short, all sorts of things. And we remain utterly unconscious of having associated them with the piece we are studying—until we try to play the well-learned piece in a different place, in the house of a friend or, if we are inexperienced enough to commit such a blunder, in the concert hall. Then we find that our memory fails us most unexpectedly, and we blame our memory for its unreliableness. But the fact is rather that our memory was only too good, too exact, for the absence of or difference from our accustomed surroundings disturbed our too precise memory. Hence, to make absolutely sure of our memory we should try our piece in a number of different places before relying upon our memory; this will dissociate the wonted environment from the piece in our memory.

With Regard to Technical Work: Play good compositions and construe out of them your own technical exercises. In nearly every piece you play you will find a place or two of which your conscience tells you that they are not up to your own wishes; that they can be improved upon either from a rhythmical, dynam-

ical or precisional point of view. Give these places the preference for a while, but do not fail to play from time to time again the whole piece in order to put the erstwhile defective and now repaired part into proper relation to its context. Remember that a difficult part may "go" pretty well when severed from its context and yet fail utterly when attempted in its proper place. You must follow the mechanic in this. If a part of a machine is perfected in the shop it must still go through the process of being "mounted"—that is, being brought into proper relation to the machine itself—and this often requires additional packing or filing, as the case may be. This "mounting" of a repaired part is done best by playing it in conjunction with one preceding and one following measure; then put two measures on each side, three, four, etc., until you feel your ground safely under your fingers. Not until then have you achieved your purpose of technical practice. The mere mastering of a difficulty *per se* is no guarantee of success whatever. Many students play certain compositions for years, and yet when they are asked to play them the evi-

dences of imperfection are so palpable that they cannot have finished the learning of them. The strong probability is that they never will finish the "study" of them, because they do not study right.

As to the Number of Pieces: The larger the number of good compositions you are able to play in a finished manner, the better grow your opportunities to develop your versatility of style; for in almost every good composition you will find some traits peculiar to itself only which demand an equally special treatment. To keep as many pieces as possible in your memory and in good technical condition, play them a few times each week. Do not play them, however, in consecutive repetitions. Take one after the other. After the last piece is played the first one will appear fresh again to your mind. This process I have tested and found very helpful in maintaining a large repertory.

Play Always with the Fingers—that is, move your arms as little as possible and hold them—and the shoulder muscles—quite loosely. The hands should be nearly horizontal, with a slight inclination from the elbows toward the

keys. Bend the fingers gently and endeavour to touch the keys in their centre and with the tips of the fingers. This will tend toward sureness and give eyes to your fingers, so to speak.

The Practice of Finger Octaves: Play octaves first as if you were playing single notes with one finger of each hand. Lift the thumb and fifth finger rather high and let them fall upon the keys without using the wrist. Later let the wrist come to your aid, sometimes even the arm and shoulder muscles, though the latter should both be reserved for places requiring great power.

Where powerful octaves occur in long continuation it is best to distribute the work over the joints and muscles of the fingers, wrists, and shoulders. With a rational distribution each of the joints will avoid over-fatigue and the player will gain in endurance. This applies, of course, only to bravura passages. In places where musical characteristics predominate the player does best to choose whichever of these sources of touch seems most appropriate.

About Using the Pedal: Beware of too frequent and—above all—of long-continued use

Incorrect Way to Play an Octave

Correct Way to Play an Octave

of the pedal. It is the mortal enemy of clarity. Judiciously, however, you should use it when you study a new work, for if you accustom yourself to play a work without the pedal the habit of non-pedalling will grow upon you, and you will be surprised to find later how your feet can be in the way of your fingers. Do not delay the use of the pedal as if it were the dessert after a repast.

Never Play with a Metronome: You may use a metronome for a little passage as a test of your ability to play the passage in strict time. When you see the result, positive or negative, stop the machine at once. For according to the metronome a really musical rhythm is unrhythmical—and, on the other hand, the keeping of absolutely strict time is thoroughly unmusical and deadlike.

You should endeavour to reproduce the sum-total of the time which a musical thought occupies. Within its scope, however, you must vary your beats in accordance with their musical significance. This constitutes in musical interpretation what I call the individual pulse-beat which imparts life to the dead, black notes.

Beware, however, of being too "individual"! Avoid exaggeration, or else your patient will grow feverish and all æsthetic interpretation goes to the happy hunting grounds!

The Correct Posture at the Piano: Sit straight before the piano but not stiff. Have both feet upon the pedals, so as to be at any moment ready to use them. All other manners to keep the feet are—bad manners. Let your hand fall with the arm upon the keyboard when you start a phrase, and observe a certain roundness in all the motions of your arms and hands. Avoid angles and sharp bends, for they produce strong frictions in the joints, which means a waste of force and is bound to cause premature fatigue.

Do Not Attend Poor Concerts. Do not believe that you can learn correct vision from the blind, nor that you can really profit by hearing how a piece should *not* be played, and then trying the reverse. The danger of getting accustomed to poor playing is very great. What would you think of a parent who deliberately sent his child into bad company in order that such child should learn how *not* to behave?

Such experiments are dangerous. By attending poor concerts you encourage the bungler to continue in his crimes against good taste and artistic decency, and you become his accomplice. Besides, you help to lower the standard of appreciation in your community, which may sink so low that good concerts will cease to be patronised. If you desire that good concerts should be given in your city the least you can do is to withhold your patronage from bad ones. If you are doubtful as to the merits of a proposed concert ask your own or your children's music teacher. He will appreciate your confidence and be glad of the opportunity to serve you for once in a musical matter that lies on a higher plane than your own or your children's music lesson.

To Those Who Play in Public I should like to say this: Before you have played a composition in public two or three times you must not expect that every detail of it shall go according to your wishes. Do not be surprised at little unexpected occurrences. Consider that the acoustic properties of the various halls constitute a serious danger to the musician. Bad

humor on your part, or a slight indisposition, even a clamlike audience, Puritanically austere or cool from diffidence—all these things can be overcome; but the acoustic properties remain the same from the beginning of your programme to its end, and if they are not a kindly counsellor they turn into a fiendish demon who sneers to death your every effort to produce noble-toned pictures. Therefore, try to ascertain, as early as possible, what sort of an architectural stomach your musical feast is to fill, and then—well, do the best you can. Approach the picture you hold in your mind as nearly as circumstances permit.

When I Find Bad Acoustics in a Hall. An important medium of rectifying the acoustic misbehaviour of a hall I have found in the pedal. In some halls my piano has sounded as if I had planted my feet on the pedal for good and ever; in such cases I practised the greatest abstention from pedalling. It is a fact that we have to treat the pedal differently in almost every hall to insure the same results. I know that a number of books have been written on the use of the pedal, but they are theories which

tumble down before the first adverse experience on the legitimate concert stage. There you can lean on nothing but experience.

About Reading Books on Music. And speaking of books on music, let me advise you to read them, but not to believe them unless they support every statement with an argument, and unless this argument succeeds in convincing you. In art we deal far oftener with exceptions than with rules and laws. Every genius in art has demonstrated in his works the forefeeling of new laws, and every succeeding one has done by his precursors as his successors have in their turn done by him. Hence all theorising in art must be problematic and precarious, while dogmatising in art amounts to absurdity. Music is a language—the language of the musical, whatever and wherever be their country. Let each one, then, speak in his own way, as he thinks and feels, provided he is sincere. Tolstoi put the whole thing so well when he said: "There are only three things of real importance in the world. They are: Sincerity! Sincerity! Sincerity!"

CORRECT TOUCH AND TECHNIC

GREAT finger technic may be defined as extreme precision and great speed in the action of the fingers. The latter quality, however, can never be developed without the legato touch. I am convinced that the degree of perfection of finger technic is exactly proportionate to the development of the legato touch. The process of the non-legato touch, by showing contrary results, will bear me out. To play a rapid run non-legato will consume much more time than to play it legato because of the lifting of the fingers between the tones. In playing legato the fingers are not lifted off the keys, but—hardly losing contact with the ivory—glide sideways to the right or the left as the notes may call for it. This, naturally, saves both time and exertion, and thus allows an increase of speed.

How is the true legato accomplished? By the gliding motion just mentioned, and by

touching the next following key before the finger which played last has fully abandoned its key. To illustrate, let me say that in a run of single notes two fingers are simultaneously at work—the " played " and the " playing " one; in runs of double notes (thirds, sixths, etc.) the number of simultaneously employed fingers is, analogously, four. Only in this manner is a true legato touch to be attained. While the fingers are in action the hand must not move lest it produce gaps between the succeeding tones, causing not only a breaking of the connection between them but also a lessening of speed. The transfer of the hand should take place only when the finger is already in touch with the key that is to follow—not at the time of contact, still less before.

The selection of a practical fingering is, of course, of paramount importance for a good legato touch. In attempting a run without a good fingering we will soon find ourselves " out of fingers." In that emergency we should have to resort to " piecing on," and this means a jerk at every instance—equal to a non-legato. A correct fingering is one which permits the long-

est natural sequel of fingers to be used without a break. By earnest thinking every player can contrive the fingering that will prove most convenient to him. But, admitting that the great diversity of hands prohibits a universal fingering, all the varieties of fingering ought to be based upon the principle of a natural sequel. If a player be puzzled by certain configurations of notes and keys as to the best fingering for them, he ought to consult a teacher, who, if a good one, will gladly help him out.

Precision, the other component part of finger technic, is intimately related with the player's general sense of orderliness. As a matter of fact, precision *is* orderliness in the technical execution of a musical prescription. If the student will but look quite closely at the piece he is learning; if he has the patience to repeat a difficult place in it a hundred times if necessary—and correctly, of course—he will soon acquire the trait of precision and he will experience the resultant increase in his technical ability.

Mental technic presupposes the ability to form a clear inward conception of a run with-

Photograph by Byron

Incorrect Position of Little Finger *Correct Position of Little Finger*

out resorting to the fingers at all. Since every action of a finger has first to be determined upon by the mind, a run should be completely prepared mentally before it is tried on the piano. In other words, the student should strive to acquire the ability to form the tonal picture in his mind, rather than the note picture.

The tonal picture dwells in our imagination. This acts upon the responsive portions of the brain, influences them according to its own intensity, and this influence is then transferred to the motoric nerve-centres which are concerned in music-making. As far as known this is the course by which the musician converts his musical concept into a tonal reality. Hence, when studying a new work, it is imperative that a tonal picture of perfect clarity should be prepared in the mind before the mechanical (or technical) practicing begins. In the earlier stages of cultivating this trait it will be best to ask the teacher to play the piece for us, and thus to help us in forming a correct tonal picture in our mind.

The blurring of the tonal picture produces a temporary (don't get frightened!) paral-

ysis of the motoric centres which control the fingers. Every pianist knows—unfortunately—the sensation of having his fingers begin to "stick" as if the keys were covered with fly-paper, and he knows, also, that this sensation is but a warning that the fingers are going on a general and even "sympathetic" strike—sympathetic, because even the momentarily unconcerned fingers participate in it. Now the cause of this sensation lies not in a defective action of the fingers themselves, but solely in the mind. It is there that some undesired change has taken place, a change which impairs the action of the fingers. The process is like this: by quick repetitions of complicated figures, slight errors, slips, flaws escape our notice; the more quick repetitions we make the larger will be the number of these tiny blots, and this must needs lead finally to a completely distorted tonal picture. This distortion, however, is not the worst feature. Inasmuch as we are very likely not to make the same little blunders at every repetition the tonal picture becomes confused, blurred. The nerve contacts which cause the fingers to act become unde-

Incorrect Position of Thumb

Correct Position of Thumb

cided first, then they begin to fail more and more, until they cease altogether and the fingers—stick! At such a juncture the student should at once resort to slow practice. He should play the defective place clearly, orderly, and, above all, slowly, and persist in this course until the number of correct repetitions proves sufficient to crowd the confused tonal picture out of the mind. This is not to be regarded as mechanical practice, for it is intended for the rehabilitation of a disarranged or disturbed mental concept. I trust this will speak for the practice of what I called "mental technic." Make the mental tonal picture sharp; the fingers must and will obey it.

We are sometimes affected by "thought-laziness"—I translate this word literally from other languages, because it is a good compound for which I can find no better equivalent in English. Whenever we find the fingers going astray in the piece we play we might as well admit to ourselves that the trouble is in the main office. The mysterious controlling officer has been talking with a friend instead of attending to business. The mind was not keep-

ing step with the fingers. We have relied on our automatism; we allowed the fingers to run on and the mind lagged behind, instead of being, as it should be, ahead of the fingers, preparing their work.

Quick musical thinking, the importance of which is thus apparent, cannot be developed by any direct course. It is one of the by-products of the general widening of one's musical horizon. It is ever proportionate to the growth of one's other musical faculties. It is the result of elasticity of the mind acquired or developed by constant, never-failing, unremitting employment whenever we are at the piano. A procedure tending directly toward developing quick musical thinking is, therefore, not necessary.

The musical will has its roots in the natural craving for musical utterance. It is the director-in-chief of all that is musical in us. Hence I recognise in the purely technical processes of piano-playing no less a manifestation of the musical will. But a technic without a musical will is a faculty without a purpose, and when it becomes a purpose in itself it can never serve art.

THE USE OF THE PEDAL

TO speak in a concrete manner of the pedal is possible only on the basis of a complete understanding of the fundamental principle underlying its use. The reader must agree to the governing theory that the organ which governs the employment of the pedal is—the ear! As the eye guides the fingers when we read music, so must the ear be the guide—and the "sole" guide—of the foot upon the pedal. The foot is merely the servant, the executive agent, while the ear is the guide, the judge, and the final criterion. If there is any phase in piano-playing where we should remember particularly that music is for the ear it is in the treatment of the pedal. Hence, whatever is said here in the following lines with regard to the pedal must be understood as resting upon the basis of this principle.

As a general rule I recommend pressing the lever or treadle down with a quick, definite, full motion and always immediately after—

mark me, after—the striking of the keys, never simultaneously with the stroke of the fingers, as so many erroneously assume and do. To prevent a cacophonous mixture of tones we should consider that we must stop the old tone before we can give pedal to the new one, and that, in order to make the stopping of the past tone perfect, we must allow the damper to press upon the vibrating strings long enough to do its work. If, however, we tread down exactly with the finger-stroke we simply inhibit this stopping, because the damper in question is lifted again before it has had time to fall down. (In speaking of the dampers as moving up and down I have in mind the action of the "grand" piano; in the upright piano the word "off" must be substituted for "up," and "on" for "down.") This rule will work in a vast majority of cases, but like every rule—especially in art—it will be found to admit of many exceptions.

Harmonic Clarity in Pedalling is the Basis, but it is only the basis; it is not all that constitutes an artistic treatment of the pedal. In spite of what I have just said above there are

Photograph by Byron

Incorrect Position of the Feet

Photograph by Byron

Correct Position of the Feet on the Pedal

in many pieces moments where a blending of tones, seemingly foreign to one another, is a means of characterisation. This blending is especially permissible when the passing (foreign) tones are more than one octave removed from the lowest tone and from the harmony built upon it. In this connection it should be remembered that the pedal is not merely a means of tone prolongation but also a means of colouring—and pre-eminently that. What is generally understood by the term piano-charm is to the greatest extent produced by an artistic use of the pedal.

For instance, great accent effects can be produced by the gradual accumulating of tone-volume through the pedal and its sudden release on the accented point. The effect is somewhat like that which we hear in the orchestra when a crescendo is supported by a roll of the drum or tympani making the last tap on the accented point. And, as I am mentioning the orchestra, I may illustrate by the French horns another use of the pedal: where the horns do not carry the melody (which they do relatively seldom) they are employed to support sus-

tained harmonies, and their effect is like a glazing, a binding, a unifying of the various tone-colours of the other instruments. Just such a glazing is produced by the judicious use of the pedal, and when, in the orchestra, the horns cease and the strings proceed alone there ensues a certain soberness of tone which we produce in the piano by the release and non-use of the pedal. In the former instance, while the horns were active they furnished the harmonic background upon which the thematic development of the musical picture proceeded; in the latter case, when the horns cease the background is taken away and the thematic configurations stand out—so to speak—against the sky. Hence, the pedal gives to the piano tone that unifying, glazing, that finish—though this is not exactly the word here—which the horns or softly played trombones give to the orchestra.

But the Pedal Can Do More Than That. At times we can produce strange, glasslike effects by purposely mixing non-harmonic tones. I only need to hint at some of the fine, embroidery-like cadenzas in Chopin's works, like the

one in his E-minor Concerto (Andante, measures 101, 102, and 103). Such blendings are productive of a multitude of effects, especially when we add the agency of dynamic gradation: effects suggestive of winds from Zephyr to Boreas, of the splash and roar of waves, of fountain-play, of rustling leaves, etc. This mode of blending can be extended also to entire harmonies in many cases where one fundamental chord is to predominate for some time while other chords may pass in quicker succession while it lasts. In such cases it is by no means imperative to abandon the pedal; we need only to establish various dynamic levels and place the ruling harmony on a higher level than the passing ones. In other words, the predominating chord must receive so much force that it can outlast all those briefer ones which, though audible, must die of their own weakness, and while the strong, ruling chord was constantly disturbed by the weaker ones it also re-established its supremacy with the death of every weaker one which it outlasted. This use of the pedal has its limitations in the evanescent nature of the tone of the piano.

That moment when the blending of non-harmonic tones imperils the tonal beauty of the piece in hand can be determined solely and exclusively by the player's own ear, and here we are once more at the point from which this article started, namely: that the ear is governor, and that it alone can decide whether or not there is to be any pedal.

It were absurd to assume that we can greatly please the ear of others by our playing so long as our own ear is not completely satisfied. We should, therefore, endeavour to train the susceptibility of our ear, and we should ever make it more difficult to gain the assent of our own ear than to gain that of our auditors. They may, apparently, not notice defects in your playing, but at this juncture I wish to say a word of serious warning: Do not confound unmindfulness with consent! To hear ourselves play—that is, to listen to our own playing—is the bed-rock basis of all music-making and also, of course, of the technic of the pedal. Therefore, listen carefully, attentively to the tones you produce. When you employ the pedal as a prolongation of the fingers (to sus-

tain tones beyond the reach of the fingers), see to it that you catch, and hold, the fundamental tone of your chord, for this tone must be always your chief consideration.

Whether You Use the Pedal as a Means of Mere Prolongation or as a medium of colouring, under no circumstances use it as a cloak for imperfection of execution. For, like charity, it is apt to be made to cover a multitude of sins; but, again like charity, who wants to make himself dependent upon it, when honest work can prevent it?

Nor should the pedal be used to make up for a deficiency of force. To produce a forte is the business of the fingers (with or without the aid of the arm) but not of the pedal, and this holds true also—*mutatis mutandis*—of the left pedal, for which the Germans use a word (*Verschiebung*) denoting something like "shifting." In a "grand" piano the treading of the left pedal shifts the hammers so far to one side that instead of striking three strings they will strike only two. (In the pianos of fifty and more years ago there were only two strings to each tone, and when the hammers were shifted by

the treading of the left pedal they struck only one string. From those days we have retained the term "*una corda*"—one string.) In an upright piano the lessening of tone-volume is produced by a lessening of the momentum of the hammer stroke.

Now, as the right pedal should not be used to cover a lack of force, so should the left pedal not be regarded as a licence to neglect the formation of a fine *pianissimo* touch. It should not cloak or screen a defective *pianissimo*, but should serve exclusively as a means of colouring where the softness of tone is coupled with what the jewellers call "dull finish." For the left pedal does not soften the tone without changing its character; it lessens the quantity of tone but at the same time it also markedly affects the quality.

To Sum Up: Train your ear and then use both pedals honestly! Use them for what they were made. Remember that even screens are not used for hiding things behind them, but for decorative purposes or for protection. Those who do use them for hiding something must have something which they prefer to hide!

PLAYING "IN STYLE"

BY playing a piece of music "in style" is understood a rendition which does absolute justice to its contents in regard to the manner of expression. Now, the true manner of expression must be sought and found for each piece individually, even though a number of different pieces may be written by one and the same composer. Our first endeavour should be to search out the peculiarity of the piece in hand rather than that of the composer in general. If you have succeeded in playing one work by Chopin in style, it does not follow, by any means, that you can play equally well any other work from his pen. Though on general lines his manner of writing may be the same in all his works, there will, nevertheless, be marked differences between the various pieces.

Only by careful study of each work by itself can we find the key to its correct conception

and rendition. We will never find it in books about the composer, nor in such as treat of his works, but only in the works themselves and in each one *per se*. People who study a lot of things about a work of art may possibly enrich their general knowledge, but they never can get that specific knowledge needful for the interpretation of the particular work in hand. Its own contents alone can furnish that knowledge. We know from frequent experience that book-learned musicians (or, as they are now called, musicologists) usually read everything in sight, and yet their playing rises hardly ever above mediocre dilettanteism.

Why should we look for a correct conception of a piece anywhere but in the piece itself? Surely the composer has embodied in the piece all he knew and felt when he wrote it. Why, then, not listen to his specific language instead of losing our way in the terms of another art? Literature is literature, and music is music. They may combine, as in song, but one can never be substituted for the other.

Many Students Never Learn to understand a composer's specific language because their

sole concern is to make the piece "effective" in the sense of a clever stunt. This tendency is most deplorable; for there really does exist a specifically musical language. By purely material means: through notes, pauses, dynamic and other signs, through special annotations, etc., the composer encloses in his work the whole world of his imagination. The duty of the interpretative artist is to extract from these material things the spiritual essence and to transmit it to his hearers. To achieve this he must understand this musical language in general and of each composition in particular.

But—how is this language to be learned?

By conning with careful attentiveness—and, of course, absorbing—the purely material matter of a piece: the notes, pauses, time values, dynamic indications, etc.

If a player be scrupulously exact in his mere reading of a piece it will, of itself, lead him to understand a goodly portion of the piece's specific language. Nay, more! Through a really correct conning the player is enabled to determine upon the points of repose as well as upon the matter of climax, and thus to cre-

ate a basis for the operations of his own imagination. After that, nothing remains but to call forth into tonal life, through the fingers, what his musical intelligence has grasped—which is a purely technical task. To transform the purely technical and material processes into a thing that lives, of course, rests with the natural, emotional, temperamental endowments of the individual; it rests with those many and complex qualities which are usually summarised by the term "talent," but this must be presupposed with a player who aspires to artistic work.

On the other hand, talent alone cannot lift the veil that hides the spiritual content of a composition if its possessor neglects to examine the latter carefully as to its purely material ingredients. He may flatter the ear, sensuously speaking, but he can never play the piece in style.

Now How Can We Know whether we are or are not approaching the spiritual phase of a piece? By repetition under unremitting attention to the written values. If, then, you should find how much there is still left for you

to do, you have proved to yourself that you have understood the piece spiritually and are on the right track to master it. With every repetition you will discover some hitherto unnoticed defect in your interpretation. Obviate these defects, one by one, and in so doing you will come nearer and nearer to the spiritual essence of the work in hand.

As to the remaining "purely technical task" (as I said before), it must not be underestimated! To transmit one's matured conception to one's auditors requires a considerable degree of mechanical skill, and this skill, in its turn, must be under absolute control of the will. Of course—after the foregoing—this does not mean that everybody who has a good and well-controlled technic can interpret a piece in style. Remember that to possess wealth is one thing, to put it to good use is quite another.

It is sometimes said that the too objective study of a piece may impair the "individuality" of its rendition. Have no fear of that! If ten players study the same piece with the same high degree of exactness and objectivity—de-

pend upon it: each one will still play it quite differently from the nine others, though each one may think his rendition the only correct one. For each one will express what, according to his lights, he has mentally and temperamentally absorbed. Of the distinctive feature which constitutes the difference in the ten conceptions each one will have been unconscious while it formed itself, and perhaps also afterward. But it is just this unconsciously formed feature which constitutes legitimate individuality and which alone will admit of a real fusion of the composer's and the interpreter's thought. A purposed, blatant parading of the player's dear self through wilful additions of nuances, shadings, effects, and what not, is tantamount to a falsification; at best it is "playing to the galleries," charlatanism. The player should always feel convinced that he plays only what is written. To the auditor, who with his own and different intelligence follows the player's performance, the piece will appear in the light of the player's individuality. The stronger this is the more it will colour the performance, when unconsciously admixed.

Rubinstein Often Said to Me: "Just play first exactly what is written; if you have done full justice to it and then still feel like adding or changing anything, why, do so." Mind well: after you have done full justice to what is written! How few are those who fulfil this duty! I venture to prove to any one who will play for me—if he be at all worth listening to—that he does not play more than is written (as he may think), but, in fact, a good deal less than the printed page reveals. And this is one of the principal causes of misunderstanding the esoteric portion, the inherent "style" of a piece—a misunderstanding which is not always confined to amateurs—inexact reading!

The true interpretation of a piece of music results from a correct understanding of it, and this, in turn, depends solely upon scrupulously exact reading.

Learn the Language of Music, then, I repeat, through exact reading! You will then soon fathom the musical meaning of a composition and transmit it intelligibly to your listeners. Would you satisfy your curiosity as to what manner of person the author is or was at

the time of writing, you may do so. But—as I said in the "Foreword"—your chief interest should centre in the "composition," not in the "composer," for only by studying his work will you be enabled to play it in style.

Anton Rubinstein

HOW RUBINSTEIN TAUGHT ME TO PLAY

OUTSIDE of the regular students of the Imperial Conservatory of Music at St. Petersburg, Rubinstein accepted but one pupil. The advantage and privilege to be that one pupil was mine.

I came to Rubinstein when I was sixteen years old and left him at eighteen. Since that time I have studied only by myself; for to whom could I have gone after Rubinstein? His very manner of teaching was such that it would have made any other teacher appear to me like a schoolmaster. He chose the method of indirect instruction through suggestive comparisons. He touched upon the strictly musical only upon rare occasions. In this way he wished to awaken within me the concretely musical as a parallel of his generalisations and thereby preserve my musical individuality.

He never played for me. He only talked,

and I, understanding him, translated his meaning into music and musical utterances. Sometimes, for instance, when I played the same phrase twice in succession, and played it both times alike (say in a sequence), he would say: "In fine weather you may play it as you did, but when it rains play it differently."

Rubinstein was much given to whims and moods, and he often grew enthusiastic about a certain conception only to prefer a different one the next day. Yet he was always logical in his art, and though he aimed at hitting the nail from various points of view he always hit it on the head. Thus he never permitted me to bring to him, as a lesson, any composition more than once. He explained this to me once by saying that he might forget in the next lesson what he told me in the previous one, and by drawing an entirely new picture only confuse my mind. Nor did he ever permit me to bring one of his own works, though he never explained to me his reason for this singular attitude.

Usually, when I came to him, arriving from Berlin, where I lived, I found him seated at

his writing-desk, smoking Russian cigarettes. He lived at the Hôtel de l'Europe. After a kindly salute he would always ask me the same question: "Well, what is new in the world?"

I remember replying to him: "I know nothing new; that's why I came to learn something new—from you."

Rubinstein, understanding at once the musical meaning of my words, smiled, and the lesson thus promised to be a fine one.

I noticed he was usually not alone when I came, but had as visitors several elderly ladies, sometimes very old ladies (mostly Russians), and some young girls—seldom any men. With a wave of his hand he directed me to the piano in the corner, a Bechstein, which was most of the time shockingly out of tune; but to this condition of his piano he was always serenely indifferent. He would remain at his desk studying the notes of the work while I played. He always compelled me to bring the pieces along, insisting that I should play everything just as it was written! He would follow every note of my playing with his eyes riveted on the printed pages. A pedant he certainly was, a stickler for

the letter—incredibly so, especially when one considered the liberties he took when he played the same works! Once I called his attention modestly to this seeming paradox, and he answered: "When you are as old as I am now you may do as I do—if you can."

Once I played a Liszt Rhapsody pretty badly. After a few moments he said: "The way you played this piece would be all right for auntie or mamma." Then rising and coming toward me he would say: "Now let us see how we play such things." Then I would begin all over again, but hardly had I played a few measures when he would interrupt and say: "Did you start? I thought I hadn't heard right——"

"Yes, master, I certainly did," I would reply.

"Oh," he would say vaguely. "I didn't notice."

"How do you mean?" I would ask.

"I mean this," he would answer: "Before your fingers touch the keys you must begin the piece mentally—that is, you must have settled in your mind the *tempo,* the manner of touch,

How Rubinstein Taught Me to Play

and, above all, the attack of the first notes, before your actual playing begins. And by-the-bye, what is the character of this piece? Is it dramatic, tragic, lyric, romantic, humourous, heroic, sublime, mystic—what? Well, why don't you speak?"

Generally I would mutter something after such a tirade, but usually I said something stupid because of the awe with which he inspired me. Finally, after trying several of his suggested designations I would hit it right. Then he would say: "Well, there we are at last! Humourous, is it? Very well! And rhapsodical, irregular—hey? You understand the meaning?" I would answer, "Yes."

"Very well, then," he would reply; "now prove it." And then I would begin all over again.

He would stand at my side, and whenever he wanted a special stress laid upon a certain note his powerful fingers would press upon my left shoulder with such force that I would stab the keys till the piano fairly screamed for me. When this did not have the effect he was after he would simply press his whole hand upon

mine, flattening it out and spreading it like butter all over the keys, black and white ones, creating a frightful cacophony. Then he would say, almost with anger, "But cleaner, cleaner, cleaner," as if the discord had been of my doing.

Such occurrences did not lack a humourous side, but their turn into the tragical always hung by a hair, especially if I had tried to explain or to make excuses. So I generally kept silent, and I found, after some experience, that was the only proper thing for me to do. For just as quickly as he would flare up he would also calm down again, and when the piece was ended I would hear his usual comment: "You are an excellent young man!" And how quickly was all pain then forgotten!

I remember on one occasion that I played Schubert-Liszt's "Erl-König." When I came to the place in the composition where the Erl-King says to the child, "Thou dear, sweet child, oh, come with me," and I had played several false notes besides very poor arpeggios, Rubinstein asked me: "Do you know the text at this place?"

As a reply I quoted the words.

"Very well, then," he said, "the Erl-King addresses the child; Erl-King is a spirit, a ghost—so play this place in a spiritlike way, ghostly, if you will, but not ghastly with false notes!"

I had to laugh at his word-play and Rubinstein himself chimed in, and the piece was saved, or rather the player. For when I repeated that particular part it went very well, and he allowed me to continue without further interruption.

Once I asked him for the fingering of a rather complex passage.

"Play it with your nose," he replied, "but make it sound well!"

This remark puzzled me, and there I sat and wondered what he meant.

As I understand it now he meant: Help yourself! The Lord helps those who help themselves!

As I said before, Rubinstein never played for me the works I had to study. He explained, analysed, elucidated everything that he wanted me to know; but, this done, he left me to my

own judgment, for only then, he would explain, would my achievement be my own and incontestable property. I learned from Rubinstein in this way the valuable truth that the conception of tone-pictures obtained through the playing of another gives us only transient impressions; they come and go, while the self-created conception will last and remain our own.

Now, when I look back upon my study-days with Rubinstein, I can see that he did not so much instruct me as that I learned from him. He was not a pedagogue in the usual meaning of that word. He indicated to me an altitude offering a fine view, but how I was to get up there was my affair; he did not bother about it. "Play with your nose!" Yes—but when I bumped it till it fairly bled where would I get the metaphorical handkerchief? In my imagination! And he was right.

To be sure, this method would not work with all pupils, but it is nevertheless well calculated to develop a student's original thought and bring out whatever acumen he may possess. If such a one succeeded by his own study and

mental force to reach the desired point which the great magician's wizardry had made him see, he had gained the reliance in his own strength: he felt sure that he would always find that point again—even though he should lose his way once or twice, as every one with an honest aspiration is liable to do.

I recall that Rubinstein once said to me: "Do you know why piano-playing is so difficult? Because it is prone to be either affected or else afflicted with mannerisms; and when these two pitfalls are luckily avoided then it is liable to be—dry! The truth lies between those three mischiefs!"

When it was settled that I should make my Hamburg début under his baton with his own D-minor Concerto, I thought the time had come at last to study with him one of his own works. So I proposed it, but Rubinstein disposed of it! I still see him, as if it were but yesterday, seated in the greenroom of the Berlin Philharmonic during an intermission in his concert (it was on a Saturday) and telling me: "We shall appear together in Hamburg on Monday." The time was short, but I knew the

Concerto and hoped to go through it with him some time in the remaining two days. I asked his permission to play the Concerto for him, but he declined my urgent request, saying: "It is not necessary; we understand each other!" And even in this critical moment he left me to my own resources. After the last (and only) rehearsal the great master embraced me before the whole orchestra, and I—well, I was not in the seventh, but in the "eighth" heaven! Everything was all right, I said to myself, for Rubinstein, Rubinstein was satisfied! The public simply had to be! The concert went off splendidly.

After that memorable début in Hamburg, which was on March 14, 1894, I went directly to see Rubinstein, little dreaming that my eyes would then see him for the last time. I brought with me a large photograph of himself, and, though fully aware of his unconquerable aversion to autographing, my desire for the possession of his signature overruled my reluctance and I made my request.

He raised both fists and thundered, half-angry and half-laughing: "*Et tu, Brute?*"

But my wish was granted, and I reproduce the portrait in this article.

Then I asked him when I should play for him again, and to my consternation he answered: "Never!"

In my despair I asked him: "Why not?"

He, generous soul that he was, then said to me: "My dear boy, I have told you all I know about legitimate piano-playing and music-making"—and then changing his tone somewhat he added: "And if you don't know it *yet,* why, go to the devil!"

I saw only too well that while he smiled as he said it he meant it seriously, and I left him.

I never saw Rubinstein again. Soon after that he returned to his villa in Peterhof, near St. Petersburg, and there he died on November 19, 1894.

The effect that his death had upon me I shall never forget. The world appeared suddenly entirely empty to me, devoid of any interest. My grief made me realise how my heart had worshipped not only the artist in him but also the man; how I loved him as if he were my father. I learned of his death through the Eng-

lish papers while I was *en route* from London to Cheltenham, where I was booked for a recital on the twentieth. The B-flat minor Sonata by Chopin happened to be on the programme, and as I struck the first notes of the Funeral March the whole audience rose from their seats as if by command and remained standing with bowed heads during the whole piece—in honour of the great departed.

A singular coincidence occurred at my concert on the preceding day—the day of Rubinstein's death.

On this day I played for the first time in public after my seven years' retirement (excepting my Hamburg début). It was in London. In this concert I played, as a novelty, a Polonaise in E-flat minor which Rubinstein had but recently written in Dresden and dedicated to me. He had included it in the set called "Souvenirs de Dresde." This piece has throughout the character of a Funeral March in all but the time-division. Little did I dream while I was playing it that day that I was singing him into his eternal rest, for it was but a few hours later that, in the far East of Europe,

my great master passed away, suddenly, of heart failure.

Two years later I played this same Polonaise for the second and last time. It was on the anniversary of his death, in St. Petersburg, where in honour of his memory I gave a recital, the proceeds of which I devoted to the Rubinstein Fund. Since then I have played this piece only once, at home and to myself, excluding it entirely from my public répertoire. For, though it was dedicated to me, the time and circumstances of its initial performance always made me feel as if it still belonged to my master, or, at best, as if it were something personal and private between us two.

Indispensables in Pianistic Success

I

"The Indispensables in Pianistic Success? Are not the indispensables in all success very much the same? Nothing can take the place of real worth. This is especially true of America, in which country I have lived longer than in any other, and which I am glad to call my home. Americans are probably the most traveled people of the world, and it is futile to offer them anything but the best. Some years ago a conductor brought to this country an orchestra of second-class character, with the idea that the people would accept it just because it bore the name of a famous European city which possessed one of the great orchestras of the world. It was a good orchestra, but there were better orchestras in American cities, and it took American audiences just two concerts to find this out, resulting in a disastrous failure, which the conductor was man enough to face and personally defray. The

American people know the best, and will have nothing but the best. Therefore, if you would make a list of the indispensables of pianistic success in this country at this time you must put at the head of your list, REAL WORTH.

"Naturally, one of the first indispensables would include what many term 'the musical gift.' However, this is often greatly misunderstood. We are, happily, past the time when music was regarded as a special kind of divine dispensation, which, by its very possession, robbed the musician of any claim to possible excellence in other lines. In other words, music was so special a gift that it was even thought by some misguided people to isolate the musician from the world—to make him a thing apart and different from other men and women of high aspirations and attainments.

"It is true that there have been famous prodigies in mathematics, and in games such as chess, who have given evidence of astonishing prowess in their chosen work, but who, at the same time, seem to have been lamentably under-developed in many other ways. This is not the case in music at this day at least, for, although a special love for music and a special quickness in mastering musical prob-

lems are indispensable, yet the musicians are usually men and women of broad cultural development if they desire it and are willing to work for it.

"Nor can I concede that a very finely developed sense of hearing is in all cases essential. The possession of what is known as absolute pitch, which so many seem to think is a sure indication of musical genius, is often a nuisance. Schumann did not possess it, and (unless I am incorrectly informed) Wagner did not have absolute pitch. I have it, and can, I believe, distinguish differences of an eighth of a tone. I find it more disturbing than beneficial. My father had absolute pitch in remarkable fashion. He seemed to have extremely acute ears. Indeed, it was often impossible for him to identify a well-known composition if he heard it played in a different key—it sounded so different to him. Mozart had absolute pitch, but music, in his day, was far less complicated. We now live in an age of melodic and contrapuntal intricacy, and I do not believe that the so-called acute sense of hearing, or highly developed sense of absolute pitch, has very much to do with one's real musical ability. The physical hearing is

nothing; the spiritual hearing—if one may say so—is what really counts. If, in transposing, for instance, one has associated the contents of a piece so closely with its corresponding tonality that it is hard to play in any other tonality, this constitutes a difficulty—not an advantage.

II

"Too much cannot be said about the advantage of an early drill. The impressions made during youth seem to be the most lasting. I am certain that the pieces that I learned before I was ten years of age remain more persistently in my memory than the compositions I studied after I was thirty. The child who is destined for a musical career should receive as much musical instruction in early life as is compatible with the child's health and receptivity. To postpone the work too long is just as dangerous to the child's career as it is dangerous to overload the pupil with more work than his mind and body can absorb. Children learn far more rapidly than adults—not merely because of the fact that the work becomes more and more complicated as the student advances, but also because the

child mind is so vastly more receptive. The child's power of absorption in music study between the ages of eight and twelve is simply enormous; it is less between twelve and twenty; still less between twenty and thirty, and often lamentably small between thirty and forty. It might be represented by some such diagram as:

30 to 40 years of age	Limited Receptivity Limited Results
20 to 30 years of age	Still Less Accomplishment
12 to 20 years of age	Less Accomplishment
8 to 12 years of age	Greatest Receptivity Greatest Accomplishment

"Of course, these lines are only comparative, and there are exceptional cases of astonishing development late in life, due to enormous ambition and industry. Yet the period of highest achievement is usually early in life. This is especially true in the arts where digital skill is concerned.

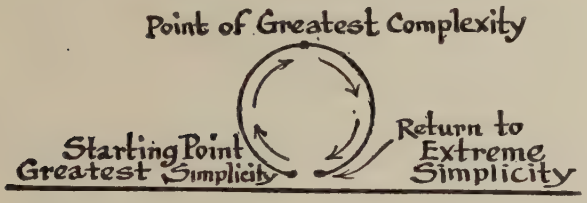
"All teachers are aware of the need for the best possible drill early in life. The idea one so often hears expressed in America: 'Since

my daughter is only beginning her studies—any teacher will do,' has been the source of great laxity in American musical education. If the father who has such an idea would only transpose the same thought to the building of a house he would be surprised to find himself saying: 'Since I am only laying a foundation, any kind of trashy material will do. I will use inferior cement, plaster, stone, bricks, decayed wood and cheap hardware, and employ the cheapest labor I can procure. But when I get to the roof I shall engage the finest roofmakers in the world!'

"The beginning is of such tremendous importance that only the best is good enough. By this I do not mean the most expensive teacher obtainable, but someone who is thorough, painstaking, conscientious, alert and experienced. The foundation is the part of the house in which the greatest strength and thoroughness is required. Everything must be solid, substantial, firm and secure, to stand the stress of use and the test of time. Of course, there is such a thing as employing a teacher with a big reputation and exceptional skill, who would make an excellent teacher for an advanced student, but who might be in-

capable of laying a good foundation for the beginner. One wants strength at the foundation—not gold ornaments and marble trimmings and beautiful decorations, fretwork, carving. Just as in great cities one finds firms which make a specialty of laying foundations for immense buildings, so it is often wise to employ a teacher who specializes in instructing beginners. In European music schools this has almost always been the case. It is not virtuosity that is needed in the makeup of the teacher of beginners, but rather sound musicianship, as well as the comprehension of the child psychology. Drill, drill, and more drill, is the secret of the early training of the mind and hand. This is indicated quite as much in games such as tennis, billiards and golf. Think of the remarkable records of some very young players in these games, and you will see what may be accomplished in the early years of the young player.

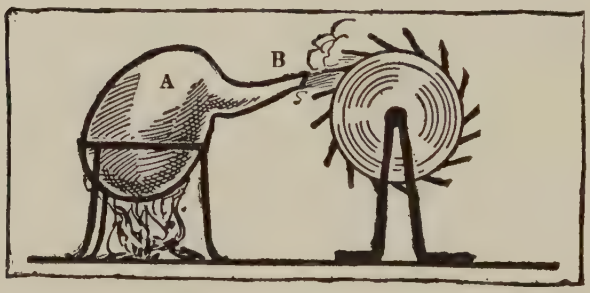
"In all arts and sciences, as one advances, complications and obstacles seem to multiply in complexity until the point of mastery is reached; then the tendency seems to reverse itself, until a kind of circle carries one round again to the point of simplicity. I have often liked to picture this to myself in this way:



"It is encouraging for the student to know that he must expect to be confronted with ever-increasing difficulties, until he reaches the point where all the intense and intricate problems seem to solve themselves, dissolving gradually into the light of a clear understanding day. This is to me a general principle underlying almost all lines of human achievement, and it appears to me that the student should learn its application, not only to his own but to other occupations and attainments. This universal line of life, starting with birth, mounting to its climax in middle life, and then passing on to greater and greater simplicity of means, until at death the circle is almost completed, is a kind of human program which all successful men would appear to follow. Perhaps we can make this clearer by studying the evolution of the steam engine.

"The steam engine started with the most primitive kind of apparatus. At the very first

it was of the turbine type. Hero of Alexander (Heron, in Greek) made the first steam engine, which was little more than a toy. According to some historians, Heron lived in the second century before Christ, and according to others his work was done in the latter half of the first century. He was an ingenious mathematician who often startled the people of this time with his mechanical contrivances. It is difficult to show the principle of his engine in an exact drawing; but the following indicates in a crude way the application of steam force something after the manner in which Heron first applied it.



"A is a retort containing water, which is heated to steam, which issues from the tube at B and is caught in the wheel in such a manner that the wheel revolves. The principle is simplicity itself; and the noteworthy fact is

that—primitive as it is—it has the characteristic principle involved in the turbine engine of to-day. After Heron many others attempted to use controlled steam to produce force, until, in 1764, James Watt made discoveries which paved the way for the modern steam engine, constituting him virtually the inventor of the type. Thereafter, the machinery became more and more complicated and enormous in size. Double, triple and quadruple expansion types were introduced until, at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, in 1876, a giant engine was exhibited by Corliss—a marvelous engine, with many elaborate details. Then, having reached the maximum curve of complexity, engine construction became more and more simple, and now we have turbine engines, such as the Parsons engines, which are all far smaller and simpler than their grandfathers of the seventies, but at the same time vastly more powerful and efficient.

III

"In the art of piano playing we have much the same line of curve. At first there was childlike simplicity. Then, with the further development of the art, we find the tendency

toward enormous technical accomplishment and very great complexity. Fifty years ago technic was everything. The art of piano playing was the art of the musical speedometer—the art of playing the greatest number of notes in the shortest possible time. Of course, there were a few outstanding giants, Rubinsteins, Liszts and Chopins, who made their technic subordinate to their message; but the public was dazzled with technic—one might better say pyrotechnics. Now we find the circle drawing toward the point of simplicity again. Great beauty, combined with adequate technic, is demanded rather than enormous technic divorced from beauty.

"Technic represents the material side of art, as money represents the material side of life. By all means achieve a fine technic, but do not dream that you will be artistically happy with this alone. Thousands—millions—of people believe that money is the basis of great happiness, only to find, when they have accumulated vast fortunes, that money is only one of the extraneous details which may—or may not—contribute to real content in life.

"Technic is a chest of tools from which the skilled artisan draws what he needs at the right

time for the right purpose. The mere possession of the tools means nothing; it is the instinct—the artistic intuition as to when and how to use the tools—that counts. It is like opening the drawer and finding what one needs at the moment.

"There is a technic which liberates and a technic which represses the artistic self. All technic ought to be a means of expression. It is perfectly possible to accumulate a technic that is next to useless. I recall the case of a musician in Paris who studied counterpoint, harmony and fugue for eight years, and at the end of that time he was incapable of using any of his knowledge in practical musical composition. Why? Because he had spent all of his time on the mere dry technic of composition, and none in actual composition. He told me that he had been years trying to link his technic to the artistic side of things—to write compositions that embodied real music, and not merely the reflex of uninspired technical exercises. I am a firm believer in having technic go hand in hand with veritable musical development from the start. Neither can be studied alone; one must balance the other. The teacher who gives a pupil a long course in strict technic

unbroken by the intelligent study of real music, is producing a musical mechanic—an artisan, not an artist.

"Please do not quote me as making a diatribe against technic. I believe in technic to the fullest extent in its proper place. Rosenthal, who was unquestionably one of the greatest technicians, once said to me: 'I have found that the people who claim that technic is not an important thing in piano playing simply do not possess it.' For instance, one hears now and then that scales are unnecessary in piano practice. A well-played scale is a truly beautiful thing, but few people play them well because they do not practice them enough. Scales are among the most difficult things in piano playing; and how the student who aspires to rise above mediocrity can hope to succeed without a thorough and far-reaching drill in all kinds of scales, I do not know. I do know, however, that I was drilled unrelentingly in them, and that I have been grateful for this all my life. Do not despise scales, but rather seek to make them beautiful.

"The clever teacher will always find some piece that will illustrate the use and result of the technical means employed. There are

thousands of such pieces that indicate the use of scales, chords, arpeggios, thirds, etc., and the pupil is encouraged to find that what he has been working so hard to acquire may be made the source of beautiful expression in a real piece of music. This, to my mind, should be part of the regular program of the student from the very start; and it is what I mean when I say that the work of the pupil in technic and in musical appreciation should go hand in hand from the beginning.

IV

"The use of the pedal is an art in itself. Unfortunately, with many it is an expedient to shield deficiency—a cloak to cover up inaccuracy and poor touch. It is employed as the veils that fading dowagers adopt to obscure wrinkles. The pedal is even more than a medium of coloring. It provides the background so indispensable in artistic playing. Imagine a picture painted without any background and you may have an inkling of what the effect of the properly used pedal is in piano playing. It has always seemed to me that it does in piano playing what the wind instruments do in the tonal mass of the orchestra. The wind instru-

ments usually make a sort of background for the music of the other instruments. One who has attended the rehearsal of a great orchestra and has heard the violins rehearsed alone, and then together with the wind instruments, will understand exactly what I mean.

"How and when to introduce the pedal to provide certain effects is almost the study of a lifetime. From the very start, where the student is taught the bad effect of holding down the 'loud' pedal while two unrelated chords are played, to the time when he is taught to use the pedal for the accomplishment of atmospheric effects that are like painting in the most subtle and delicate shades, the study of the pedal is continuously a source of the most interesting experiment and revelation.

"There should be no hard-and-fast rules governing the use of the pedal. It is the branch of pianoforte playing in which there must always be the greatest latitude. For instance, in the playing of Bach's works on the modern pianoforte there seems to have been a very great deal of confusion as to the propriety of the use of the pedal. The Bach music, which is played now on the keyboard of the modern piano, was, for the most part, originally

written for either the clavier or for the organ. The clavichord had a very short sound, resembling in a way the staccato touch on the present-day piano, whereas the organ was and is capable of a great volume of sound of sustained quality. Due to the contradictory nature of these two instruments and the fact that many people do not know whether a composition at hand was written for the clavichord or for the organ, some of them try to imitate the organ sound by holding the pedal all the time or most of the time, while others try to imitate the clavichord and refrain from the use of the pedal altogether. The extreme theories, as in the case of all extreme theories, are undoubtedly wrong.

"One may have the clavichord in mind in playing one piece and the organ in mind in playing another. There can be nothing wrong about that, but to transform the modern pianoforte, which has distinctly specific tonal attributes, into a clavichord or into an organ must result in a tonal abuse.

"The pedal is just as much a part of the pianoforte as are the stops and the couplers a part of the organ or the brass tangents a part of the clavichord. It is artistically impossible

to so camouflage the tone of the pianoforte as to make it sound like either the organ or the clavichord. Even were this possible, the clavichord is an instrument which is out of date, though the music of Bach is still a part and parcel of the musical literature of to-day. The oldest known specimen of the clavichord (dated 1537) is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City. Should you happen to view this instrument you would realize at once that its action is entirely different from that of the piano, just as its tone was different. You cannot possibly make a piano sound like a clavichord through any medium of touch or pedals. Therefore, why not play the piano as a piano? Why try to do the impossible thing in endeavoring to make the piano sound like another instrument of a different mechanism? Why not make a piano sound like a piano? Must we always endure listening to Wagner's music in a variety show and to Strauss' waltzes in Carnegie Hall?

V

"If one were to ask me what is the indispensable thing in the education of a pianist, I would say: 'First of all, a good guide.' By

this I do not mean merely a good teacher, but rather a mentor, a pilot who can and who will oversee the early steps of the career of a young person. In my own case, I was fortunate in having a father, a professional musician, who realized my musical possibilities, and from the very beginning was intensely interested in my career, not merely as a father, but as an artist guiding and piloting every day of my early life. Fate is such a peculiar mystery, and the student, in his young life, can have but a slight idea of what is before him in the future. Therefore, the need of a mentor is essential. I am sure that my father was the author of a great deal of the success that I have enjoyed. It was he who took me to Moszkowski and Rubinstein. The critical advice—especially that of Rubinstein—was invaluable to me. The student should have unrelenting criticism from a master mind. Even when it is caustic, as was von Bülow's, it may be very beneficial. I remember once in the home of Moszkowski that I played for von Bülow. The taciturn, cynical conductor-pianist simply crushed me with his criticism of my playing. But, young though I was, I was not so conceited as to fail to realize that he was right. I shook hands

with him and thanked him for his advice and criticism. Von Bülow laughed and said, 'Why do you thank me? It is like the chicken thanking the one who had eaten it, for doing so.' Von Bülow, on that same day played in such a jumbled manner with his old, stiffened fingers, that I asked Moszkowski how in the world it might be possible for von Bülow to keep a concert engagement which I knew him to have a few days later in Berlin. Moszkowski replied: 'Let von Bülow alone for that. You don't know him. If he sets out to do something, he is going to do it.'

"Von Bülow's playing, however, was almost always pedantic, although unquestionably scholarly. There was none of the leonine spontaneity of Rubinstein. Rubinstein was a very exacting schoolmaster at the piano when he first undertook to train me; but he often said to me, 'The main object is to make the music sound right, even though you have to play with your nose!' With Rubinstein there was no *ignus fatuus* of mere method. Any method that would lead to fine artistic results—to beautiful and effective performance—was justifiable in his eyes.

"Finally, to the student let me say: 'Always

work hard and strive to do your best. Secure a reliable mentor if you can possibly do so, and depend upon his advice as to your career. Even with the best advice there is always the element of fate—the introduction of the unknown—the strangeness of coincidence which would almost make one believe in astrology and its dictum that our terrestrial course may be guided by the stars. In 1887, when I played in Washington as a child of eleven, I was introduced to a young lady, who was the daughter of Senator James B. Eustis. Little did I dream that this young woman, of all the hundreds and hundreds of girls introduced to me during my tours, would some day be my wife. Fate plays its rôle—but do not be tempted into the fallacious belief that success and everything else depend upon fate, for the biggest factor is, after all, hard work and intelligent guidance.'"

PIANO QUESTIONS

ANSWERED BY

JOSEF HOFMANN

AUTHOR OF "PIANO PLAYING"

A LITTLE BOOK OF DIRECT ANSWERS
TO TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY QUESTIONS
ASKED BY PIANO STUDENTS

PHILADELPHIA
THEODORE PRESSER CO.
1920

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THAT OF TRANSLATION
INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES, INCLUDING THE SCANDINAVIAN

COPYRIGHT, 1909, BY DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
PUBLISHED, OCTOBER, 1909

CONTENTS

TECHNIQUE	PAGE
1. General	3
2. Position of the Body	4
3. Position of the Hand	6
4. Position of the Fingers	6
5. Action of the Wrist	9
6. Action of the Arm	11
7. Stretching	12
8. The Thumb	14
9. The Other Fingers	16
10. Weak Fingers, etc.	18
11. Staccato	21
12. Legato	22
13. Precision	25
14. Piano Touch *vs* Organ Touch	26
15. Fingering	27
16. The Glissando	29
17. Octaves	29
18. Repetition Technique	34
19. Double Notes	35
THE INSTRUMENT	35
THE PEDALS	39
PRACTICE	45
MARKS AND NOMENCLATURE	57

PAGE

ABOUT CERTAIN PIECES AND COMPOSERS . 75
1. Bach 80
2. Beethoven 83
3. Mendelssohn 85
4. Chopin 86
EXERCISES AND STUDIES 93
POLYRYTHMS 96
PHRASING 98
RUBATO 100
CONCEPTION 102
FORCE OF EXAMPLE 104
THEORY 104
THE MEMORY 112
SIGHT-READING 117
ACCOMPANYING 117
TRANSPOSING 119
PLAYING FOR PEOPLE 120
ABOUT THE PIANO PER SE 127
BAD MUSIC 133
ETHICAL 135
PITCH AND KINDRED MATTERS . . . 136
THE STUDENT'S AGE 138
TEACHERS, LESSONS AND METHODS . . 140
MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS . . . 150

A FOREWORD

THIS little book is compiled from the questions and my answers to them, as they have appeared during the past two years in the *Ladies' Home Journal.* Since the questions came mostly from young piano students and cover a large number of matters important to the study of the piano, it was thought that this republication might be of interest to piano students in general, and that, gathered into a little volume, they might form a new and perhaps not unwelcome sort of reference book.

To serve as such and to facilitate the reader's search for any particular subject, I have grouped the questions, together with their answers, under special headings.

It is only natural, however, that a book of this character cannot contain more than mere suggestions to stimulate the reader's individual thinking. Positive facts, which can be found in books on musical history and in kindred works,

are, therefore, stated only where they are needful as a basis for the replies. Any rule or advice given to some particular person cannot fit every other person unless it is passed through the sieve of one's own individual intelligence and is, by this process, so modified as to fit one's own particular case.

There are, in addition to the questions presented and answered, one or two points about piano-playing that would naturally not occur to the average student. The opportunity to discuss those here is too favourable to be allowed to pass, and as they hardly admit of precise classification, I venture to offer them here as a brief foreword.

To the hundreds of students who at various times have asked me: What is the quickest way to become a great piano-player? I will say that such a thing as a royal road, a secret trick, or a patent method to quickly become a great artist, does not exist. As the world consists of atoms; as it is the infinitely small things that have forced the microscope into the scientist's hand, so does art contain numberless small, seemingly insignificant things

which, if neglected entirely, visit dire vengeance upon the student. Instead of prematurely concerning himself with his inspiration, spirituality, genius, fancy, etc., and neglecting on their account the material side of piano study, the student should be willing to progress from atom to atom, slowly, deliberately, but with absolute certainty that each problem has been completely solved, each difficulty fully overcome, before he faces the next one. Leaps, there are none!

Unquestionably it does sometimes happen that an artist suddenly acquires a wide renown. In such a case his leap was not into greatness, but merely into the public's recognition of it; the greatness must have been in him for some time before the public became aware of it. If there was any leaping, it was not the artist, but the public that did it.

Let us not close our eyes to the fact that there have been — and probably always will be — artists that gain a wide renown *without* being great; puffery, aided by some personal eccentricity, is quite able to mislead the public, but these will, at best, do it only for a short time, and

the collapse of such a reputation, as collapse there must be, is always sure, and sad to behold.

The buoyancy of mind, its ability to soar, so necessary for both creative and interpretative art, these are never impaired by close attention to detail. If they should be destroyed by attention to detail, it would not matter, for they cannot have been genuine; they can have been but sentimental imaginings. Details are the very steps which, one by one, lead to the summit of art; we should be careful not to lift one foot before the other one rests quite securely upon its step. One should — to illustrate — not be satisfied with the ability of "getting through" some difficult passage "by the skin of the teeth" or "without breaking down," but should strive to be able to play *with* it, to toy with it, in order to have it at one's beck and call in any variation of mood, so as to play it as it pleases the mind and not only the fingers. One should acquire sovereignty over it.

This sovereignty is technique. But — technique is not art. It is only a means to achieve art, a paver of the path toward

it. The danger of confounding technique with art itself is not inconsiderable, since it takes a long time to develop a trustworthy technique; and this prolonged association with one subject is apt to give it supremacy over all others in one's mind. To guard against this serious danger the student should, above all, never lose sight of the fact that music, as does any other art, springs from our innate craving for individual expression. As word-thought is transmitted from man to man by verbal language so are feelings, emotions, moods — crystallized into tone-thought — conveyed by music. The effects of music may, therefore, be ennobling and refining; but they can as easily be degrading and demoralizing. For the saints and sinners among music-makers are probably in the same proportion as among the followers of other professions. The ethical value of music depends, therefore, not upon the musician's technique, but solely upon his moral tendencies. The student should never strive to dazzle his auditor's ear with mere technical brilliancy, but should endeavour to gladden his heart, to refine his feelings and sensibilities, by transmitting noble musical

thoughts to his mind. He should scorn all unnecessary, charlatanish externalities and strive ever for the inwardness of the composition he interprets; for, in being honest to the composition he will also be honest to himself and thus, consciously or not, express his own best self. If all musicians were sincere in this endeavour there could be neither envy nor jealousy among them; advancing hand in hand toward their common ideal they could not help being of mutual assistance to each other.

Art, not unlike religion, needs an altar around which its devotees may congregate. Liszt, in his day, had erected such an altar in Weimar, and as its high priest he stood, himself, before it — a luminous example of devotion to art. Rubinstein did the same in St. Petersburg. Out of these atmospheres, thanks to the inspiring influences of Liszt's and Rubinstein's wonderful personalities, there have emerged a large number of highly meritorious and some eminent artists. That many of them have lacked the power in their later life to withstand the temptations of quick material gain by descending to a lower

plane is to be regretted, but — such is life. Many are called, but few are chosen. Since those days several of these "many" have attempted to create similar centres in Europe. They failed, because they were not serving art, but rather made art serve their own worldly purposes.

The artists of talent no longer group themselves around the man of genius. Perhaps he is not to be found just now. Each little celebrity among the pianists keeps nowadays a shop of his own and all to himself. Many of these shops are "mints," and some of them produce counterfeits. As a matter or course, this separative system precludes all unification of artistic principles and is, therefore, very harmful to the present generation of students. The honest student who will discriminate between these, sometimes cleverly masked, counterfeit mints, and a real art altar must be of a character in which high principles are natively ingrained. It might help him somewhat to remember that when there is no good to choose we can always reject the bad.

What is true of teachers is just as true of compositions. The student should not

listen to — should not, at least, repeat the hearing of — bad compositions, though they may be called symphonies or operas. And he can, in a considerable measure, rely upon his own instincts in this matter. He may not—and probably will not—fully fathom the depths of a new symphony at its first hearing, but he must have received general impressions of sufficient power and clearness to make him *wish* for another hearing. When this wish is absent he should not hear the work again from a mere sense of duty; it were far wiser to avoid another hearing, for habit is a strong factor, and if we accustom our ear to hear cacophonous music we are apt to lose our aversion to it, which is tantamount to a loss of good, natural taste. It is with much of modern music as it is with opium, morphine, and other deadly drugs. We should shun their very touch. These musical opiates are sometimes manufactured by persons of considerable renown; of such quickly gained renown as may be acquired nowadays by the employment of commercialistic methods; a possibility for which the venal portion of the public press must bear part of the blame. The student

should not be deceived by names of which the general familiarity is of too recent a date. I repeat that he should rather consult his own feelings and by following them contribute his modest share toward sending some of the present "moderns" back into their deserved obscurity and insignificance.

I use the term "moderns" advisedly, for the true masters — some of whom died but recently — have never stooped to those methods of self-aggrandisement at which I hinted. Their places of honour were accorded to them by the world because they were theirs, by right of their artistic power, their genius and the purity of their art. My advice to the students and to all lovers of music is: Hold on with all your might to the school of sincerity and chastity in music! It is saner and, morally and æsthetically, safer than the entire pack of our present nerve-tickling, aye, and nerve-racking "modernists." Music should always elevate; it should always call forth what, according to the demands of time and place, is best in us. When, instead of serving this divine mission, it speculates upon, and arouses, our lowest instincts for no better purpose than to fill

the pockets of its perpetrator, it should receive neither the help nor the encouraging attention of any noble-thinking and clean-minded man or woman. Passive resistance can do a good deal on these premises.

The matter of abstention from a certain type of music recalls to my mind another evil from which Americans should abstain; it is the curious and out-of-date superstition that music can be studied abroad better than here. While their number is not very large, I personally can name five American teachers who have struggled here for many a year without gaining that high recognition which they deserve. And now? Now they are in the various capitals of Europe, receiving the highest fees that were ever paid for instruction, and they receive these high fees from American students that throng their studios. That the indifference of their compatriots drove these men practically out of their country proved to be of advantage to them; but how ought those to be regarded who failed to keep them here? The wrong is irreparable in so far as these men do not think of returning to America except as visitors. The duty of American students and lovers

of good music is to see to it that such capable teachers as *are* still here should *remain* here. The mass of emigration to Europe of our music students should cease! If a student has what is understood by "finished" his studies here and his teacher sets him free, he may make a reconnoitring tour in Europe. The change of views and customs will, no doubt, broaden his mind in certain directions. But musically speaking, he will be sure to find that most of the enchantment of Europe was due to its distance. Excepting the excellent orchestras of Europe and speaking of the general music-making there, it is at present not quite as good as it is here: neither is the average music teacher in Europe a whit better than the man of equal standing here.

Americans should take cognizance of the fact that their country has not stood still in music any more than in any other direction. Each year has recorded an advancing step in its development. We must cease to compare the Europe of to-day with the America of fifty years ago. At present there is an astonishingly large number of clever and capable musicians

in America, and, as with good physicians and lawyers, their ability usually stands in inverse proportion to the amount of their advertising. It is these worthy teachers for whose sake the superstition of "studying abroad" should be foresworn. What Uncle Sam has, in the field of music, not directly produced he has acquired by the natural law of attraction; now that so many talented and learned instructors, both native and foreign, are here they should be given a fair opportunity to finish a pupil's development as far as a teacher can do it, instead of seeing him, half-done, rush off "to Europe." If I were not convinced that a change on this score is possible, I should not have devoted so many words to it. It is merely a question of making a start. Let me hope that each reader of this little book may start this change, or, that, if already started, he will foster and help it. If his efforts should be disparaged by some, he need not feel disheartened, but remember that he belongs to the "land of limitless possibilities."

JOSEF HOFMANN.

PIANO QUESTIONS

TECHNIQUE

1. GENERAL

What Does "Technique" Mean?

What are the different techniques, and which one is most generally used? What is the difference between them?

Technique is a generic term, comprising scales, arpeggios, chords, double notes, octaves, legato, and the various staccato touches as well as the dynamic shadings. They are all necessary to make up a complete technique.

The More Technique the More Practice

Why do pianists who have more technique than many others practise more than these others?

Why have the Rothschilds more secretaries than I have? Because the administration of a large fortune entails more work than that of a small one. A pianist's technique is the material portion of his artistic possessions; it is his capital. To keep a great technique in fine working

trim is in itself a considerable and time-absorbing task. And, besides, you know that the more we have the more we want. This trait is not only human; it is also pianistic.

How to Improve the Technique

Should I endeavour to improve my technique by trying difficult pieces?

You should not confine yourself to pieces that come easy to you, for that would prevent all further technical progress. But beware of pieces that are so difficult that you could not play them — in a slower tempo — with absolute correctness. For this would lead to the ruin of your technique and kill the joy in your studies. Play pieces that are always a trifle harder than those you have completely mastered. Do not emulate those who say: "I play already this or that," without asking themselves "how" they play. Artistry depends ever upon the "how."

2. POSITION OF THE BODY

Do Not Raise the Piano-Stool Too High

Are the best results at the piano attained by sitting high or low?

As a general rule, I do not recommend a high seat at the piano, because this in-

duces the employment of the arm and shoulders rather than of the fingers, and is, of course, very harmful to the technique. As to the exact height of the seat, you will have to experiment for yourself and find out at which height you can play longest with the least fatigue.

The Height of the Piano Seat

Is my seat at the piano to be at the same height when I practise as when I play for people?

Yes! Height and distance (from the keyboard) of your chair — which should never have arms — you should decide for yourself and once for all time; for only then can you acquire a normal hand position, which, in its turn, is a condition *sine qua non* for the development of your technique. See also to it that both feet are in touch with their respective pedals so as to be in place when their action is required. If they stray away and you must grope for the pedals when you need them it will lead to a break in your concentration, and this will cause you to play less well than you really can. To let the feet stray

from the pedals easily affects your entire position. It is a bad habit. Alas, that bad habits are so much easier acquired than good ones!

3. POSITION OF THE HAND

The Tilt of The Hand in Playing Scales

Should my hand in playing scales be tilted toward the thumb or toward the little finger? I find that in the scales with black keys it is much easier to play the latter way.

I quite share your opinion, and extend it also to the scales without black keys. I think the natural tendency of the hands is to lean toward the little finger, and as soon as you have passed the stage of preliminary training, as soon as you feel fairly certain that your fingers act evenly, you may yield to their natural tendency, especially when you strive more for speed than force; for speed does not suffer tension, while force craves it.

4. POSITION OF THE FINGERS

The Results Count, Not the Methods

Does it make any difference if my fingers are held very much curved or only a little? I was told that Rubenstein used his fingers almost flat.

Since you mention Rubinstein I may quote his saying: "Play with your nose, if you will, but produce euphony (*Wohlklang*) and I will recognize you as a master of your instrument." It is ever a question of the result, whether you play this way or that way. If you should play with very much curved fingers and the result should sound uneven and pieced, change the curving little by little until you find out what degree of curvature suits your hand best. Experiment for yourself. Generally speaking, I recommend a free and easy position of hand and fingers, for it is only in a position of greatest freedom that their elasticity can be preserved, and elasticity is the chief point. By a free and easy position I mean that natural position of hand and fingers into which they fall when you drop your hand somewhat leisurely upon the keyboard.

Cantabile Passages

Should a cantabile passage be played with a high finger-stroke or by using the weight of the arm?

Certain characteristic moments in some pieces require the high finger-

stroke. It may be used also in working up a climax, in which case the raising of the fingers should increase proportionately to the rise of the climax. Where, however, the strength of the fingers is sufficient to obtain the climacteric result by pressure, instead of the stroke, it is always preferable to use pressure. As a general principle, I believe in the free-hanging, limp arm and recommend using its weight in cantabile playing.

An Incorrect Position of the Fingers

Pray how can I correct the fault of bending out the first joints of the fingers when their cushions are pressed down upon the keys?

Your trouble comes under the head of faulty touch, which nothing will correct but the constant supervision by a good teacher, assisted by a strong exertion of your own will power and strictest attention whenever you play. This bending out of the first joint is one of the hardest pianistic ailments to cure, but it is curable. Do not be discouraged if the cure is slow. The habit of years cannot be thrown off in a day.

5. ACTION OF THE WRIST

Don't Stiffen the Hands in Playing Scales

Should the hands be kept perfectly still in playing scales and arpeggios? Or, to lessen fatigue, is an occasional rise and fall of the wrist permissible in a long passage of scale or arpeggio?

The hands should, indeed, be kept still, but not stiff. Protracted passages of scales or arpeggios easily induce a stiffening of the wrist. Hence, an occasional motion of the wrist, upward and downward, will do much to counteract this tendency. It will, besides, be a good test of the looseness of the wrist.

The Loose Wrist

Is it not impossible to preserve a complete looseness of the wrist in piano-playing because of the muscles that connect the forearm with the hand?

By no means. You should only see to it that you do not stiffen the wrist *unconsciously*, as most players do. The arm should be held so that the wrist is on a line with it, not bent, and by concentrated thinking you should endeavour to transfer the display of force to the finger-tips instead of holding the

tension in your arm. For this produces fatigue, while the way I suggest will lead you to develop considerable force through the hand and fingers alone and leave the arm practically limp and loose. It takes months of study under closest attention, however, to acquire this looseness of the arm.

The Position of the Wrist

Do you favour a low or high position of the wrist for average type of work?

For average work, I recommend an average position; neither high nor low. Changes, upward or downward, must be made to meet the requirements of special occasions.

Do Not Allow the Wrist to Get Stiff

If one's wrist is stiff is there any set of exercises especially adapted to acquiring a freer movement? Or is there any special method of exercise?

It depends on whether your wrist is stiff from non-use or from wrong use. Assuming the latter, I should recommend studies in wrist octaves, but you must watch your wrist while playing and rest at the slightest indication of its stiffening.

6. ACTION OF THE ARM

When Tremolo Proves Unduly Fatiguing

I cannot play tremolo in the left hand for any length of time without great fatigue. I have tried changing the position of the hand from high to low, the sidewise motion, and the quiet hand. What is the correct method, and may the difficulty be overcome by slow practice?

The tremolo cannot be practised slowly, nor with a stiff or quiet hand. The action must be distributed over the hand, wrist, underarm and, if necessary, the elbow. The shoulder forms the pivot whence a vibratory motion must proceed and engage all the points on the road to the fingers. The division of labour cannot be done consciously, but should better proceed from a feeling as if the whole arm was subjected to an electric current while engaged in playing a tremolo.

Play Chords With a Loose Arm

Should octave chords be played with rigid arms, the wrists and fingers thereby increasing the tone volume, or should the arms be loose? My teachers differ in their methods; so I turn to you for advice.

With few exceptions, dictated by certain characterizations, chords should always be played with a loose arm. Let the arm pull the hand above the keys and then let both fall heavily upon them, preparing the fingers for their appropriate notes while still in the air and not, as many do, after falling down. This mode of touch produces greater tone-volume, is least fatiguing, and will have no bad after-effects.

7. STRETCHING

Fatiguing the Hand by Stretching

I stretch beween my fingers — taking the second and third, for instance, and trying to see how many keys I can get between them. It has helped me, but shall I be doing wrong to continue?

If, as you say, you feel benefited by your stretching exercises you may continue them. But in your place I should beware of fatigue, for while the hand may show an improvement in its stretch while you are practising these exercises, if it is fatigued it will afterward contract so that its stretch is liable to become narrower than it was before.

Do Not Injure the Hand by Stretching It

Is there any way to increase the stretch of my very small hand?

Any modern teacher, acquainted with your hand, can devise certain exercises that will be applicable to your particular hand. As the lack of stretch, however, may be due to a number of different causes I should advise you to desist from any stretch exercise that might be recommended to you without a close examination of your hand, since the wrong kind of exercise is not only apt, but bound, to injure it, perhaps permanently.

A Safe Way of Stretching the Small Hand

Is there any exercise, on the piano or otherwise, that would tend to stretch my hand so as to enable me to play octaves? My fingers are short and stubby. My teacher has not given me anything definite on this score.

The attempts to widen the natural stretch of the hand by artificial means lead easily to disastrous results. It was by just such attempts that Schumann rendered his hand useless for piano-playing. The best I can recommend is that before playing you soak your hands in rather hot water for several minutes

and then — while still in the water — stretch the fingers of one hand with the other. By doing this daily you will gain in stretch, provided you refrain from forcing matters, and provided also that you are still young, and your hands are flexible.

8. THE THUMB

"What is the Matter With My Scales?"

What is the matter with my scales? I cannot play them without a perceptible jerk when I use my thumb. How can I overcome the unevenness?

In answering this question I am in the position of a physician who is expected to prescribe a treatment for a patient whom he has neither examined nor even seen. I can therefore advise only in a very general way — as I have done with many questions to avoid the eventuality of being confronted by an exceptional case. The cause of the hand's unrest in the passing of the thumb lies usually in transferring the thumb too late. The thumb waits usually until the very moment when it is needed and then quickly jumps upon the proper key, instead of moving toward it as soon

as the last key it touched can be released. This belatedness causes a jerky motion of the arm and imparts it to the hand. Another cause lies in a fault no less grave than the first. Since the hand has only five fingers while the scale numbers many notes (according to its length), the player must replenish his fingers by passing the thumb under the hand so as to form a conjunction between the notes played and those to be played. This passing of the thumb conditions a change or shifting of the hand toward the keys to follow, but the shifting of the hand must not coincide with the passing of the thumb or the result will be a jerk. The position of the hand in relation to the keyboard must not change. It must remain the same until the thumb has struck its new key. Not until then must the shifting of the hand take place. In this way the jumpiness or jerkiness of the scale can be avoided, provided one can follow this precept punctiliously — which is not an easy matter, especially in great speed. Alas, why are those pesky scales so difficult, in fact,

the most difficult thing to do on the piano?

How to Hold the Thumb

What is the correct position for the thumb? Should it be curved well under the hand while playing?

In scale-playing the thumb should be slightly curved and kept near the index finger in order to be ready when needed. In pieces this position of the thumb cannot, of course, always be observed.

Which Fingers Demand Most Attention?

Should one pay special attention to the training of the thumb?

It may be said that the thumb and the middle finger are the two arch-conspirators against a precise finger technique. They crave your greatest attention. Above all, you must see to it that, in touching the keys with these fingers, you do not move the whole hand, still less the arm.

9. THE OTHER FINGERS

The Fourth and Fifth Fingers

What exercise would you recommend for the training of the fourth and the fifth fingers?

Any collection of Etudes is sure to

contain some that are devoted to the training of those two fingers. In the Cramer Etudes (Bulow's selection) you will find Nos. 9, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20 adapted to your case, but do not pin your faith to the print! In all matters of art the "how" is of far more consequence than the "what." Play what you will, but bear your weak points in mind while you play. This is the real remedy. Keep hand and arm as loose as you can while training the fourth and fifth fingers.

The Action of the Little Finger

In making wide skips in which the little finger strikes a single note, as, for instance, in left-hand waltz accompaniments, should one strike on the end of the little finger or on its side; and should the finger be curved or held more or less flat?

The little finger should never strike with its side. It should always be held in its normally curved condition, and straighten at the stroke only on such occasions when its own force proves insufficient and requires the assistance of the wrist and arm muscles.

10. WEAK FINGERS, ETC.

To Strengthen the Weak Finger Use It

How can I strengthen the little finger of my right hand? I avoid it in playing, using the next finger instead.

By employing your little finger as much as possible and at once quitting the habit of substituting another finger for it.

The Weak Fingers of the Left Hand

What exercise would you recommend for the training of the fourth and fifth fingers of the left hand?

Slow trill with various touches, with highly lifted fingers producing strength through their fall and with a lesser lift of the fingers combined with pressure touch, watching closely that the little finger strikes with the tip and not with the side. Rhythmic evenness should also be punctiliously observed.

When the Fingers Seem Weak

What kind of technical work would you advise me to take to make my fingers strong in the shortest time consistent with good work?

If your fingers are unusually weak it may be assumed that your muscular constitution in general is not strong.

The training of the fingers alone will, in that case, lead to no decisive results. You will have to strive for a general strengthening of your muscular fibre. At this point, however, begins the province of your physician and mine ends. If you consider your constitution normal, four or five hours' daily work at the piano will develop the necessary digital force, if that time is judiciously used.

No Necessity to Watch the Fingers

Is it always necessary to watch the fingers with the eye?

In places where the fingers slide, and do not jump from one note to another at a distance, there is no need of keeping the eye on them.

Biting the Finger-Nails Spoils the Touch

Is biting the finger-nails injurious to the piano touch?

Certainly; biting the nails or any other injury to the finger-tips and hand will spoil your touch. Extreme cleanliness and care in cutting the nails the proper length are necessary to keep your hands in condition for playing the piano.

To Prevent Sore Finger-Tips After Playing

How can I prevent my finger-tips, after prolonged playing, from feeling sore the next day?

Experience teaches that in such cases, as in many others, cleanliness is the best remedy. After playing wash your fingers at once in warm water, with soap and brush, and then rub them well with either cold cream or some similar fatty substance. In the development of speed on the piano, the rigidity of the skin on the fingers is a great hindrance; it makes us feel as if we played with gloves on the fingers.

Broad-Tipped Fingers Not a Disadvantage

Are broad-tipped fingers considered a detriment to a man student of piano; for instance, if the finger grazes the black keys on each side when playing between them?

Unless broad-tipped fingers are of an unusual thickness I do not consider them an obstacle in the way of good piano-playing; the less so, as the white keys — whatever shape the fingers may have — should never be struck between the black ones, but only in the midst of the open space. Altogether, I hold that the shape

of the hand is of far greater importance to the pianist than the shape of his fingers; for it furnishes the fingers with a base of operations and with a source of strength, besides holding the entire control over them. Studying the hands and fingers of celebrated pianists you will find a great variety of finger shapes, while their hands are usually broad and muscular.

What to do With the Unemployed Hand

When playing a piece in which a rest of a measure and a half or two measures occurs should I drop my hand in my lap or keep it on the keyboard?

If the temporarily unemployed hand is tired it will rest better in the lap, because this position favours the blood circulation, which, in its turn, tends to renew the strength. I should, however, not put it away from the keyboard too often, for this might easily be taken for a mannerism.

11. STACCATO

Wrist Staccato at a High Tempo

What can I do to enable me to play wrist staccato very fast without fatiguing the arm?

Change your wrist staccato for a

little while to a finger or arm staccato, thus giving the wrist muscles a chance to rest and regain their strength.

The Difference Between "Finger Staccato" and Other Kinds

What does "finger staccato" mean? Is not staccato always done with the fingers?

By no means! There is a well-defined arm staccato, a wrist staccato, and a finger staccato. The latter is produced by a touch similar to the rapid repetition touch — that is, by not allowing the fingers to fall perpendicularly upon the keys, but rather let them make a motion as if you were wiping a spot off the keys with the finger-tips, without the use of the arm, and rapidly pulling them toward the inner hand. The arm should take no part in it whatever.

12. LEGATO

The Advantage of Legato Over Staccato

Is it better for me to practise more staccato or more legato?

Give the preference to legato, for it produces the genuine piano tone, and it develops the technique of the fingers; while the staccato touch always tends to draw the arm into action. If you play

from the arm you cannot expect any benefit for the fingers. For the acquisition of a legitimate legato Chopin's works cannot be highly enough recommended, even in the transcriptions by Godowsky, which become impossible when tried with any touch other than legato. He wrote them, so to speak, out of his own hand, and his legato is so perfect that it may well be taken as a model by anybody.

To Produce Good Legato

Should you advise me to make use of a high finger-stroke? My teacher makes me use it exclusively, but I notice that my playing is neither legato nor quiet. It is almost humpy.

Your manner of putting the question expressed your own — and correct — judgment in the matter. This playing "in the air" is lost energy, and will not lead to a good legato. The most beautiful tone in legato style is ever produced by a "clinging and singing" gliding of the fingers over the keys. Of course, you have to watch your touch in order that your "clinging" does not deteriorate into "blurring," and that your "gliding" may

not turn into "smearing." If you apprehend any such calamity you must for a while increase the raising of your fingers and use more force in their falling upon the keys. Under constant self-observation and keen listening you may, after a while, return to the gliding manner. This much in general; of course, there are places and passages where just the opposite of my advice could be said, but still I think that the high finger-stroke should rather be employed for some special characteristic effects than as a general principle.

The Firm and Crisp Legato Touch

I am confused by the terms "firm legato touch" and "crisp legato touch." Wherein lies the difference?

Legato means "bound together," for which we substitute the word "connected." Two tones are either connected or they are not connected. The idea of various kinds of legato is purely a sophism, a product of non-musical hyper-analysis. By "legato" I understand the connecting of tones with each other through the agency of the fingers (on the piano). The finger that evoked a tone should not

leave its key until the tone generated by the next finger has been perceived by the ear. This rule governs the playing of melodies and slow passages. In rapid passages, where the control through the ear is lessened, the legato is produced by more strictly mechanical means, but there should, nevertheless, always be two fingers simultaneously occupied. Do not take the over-smart differentiations of legato seriously. There is no plural to the word "legato."

13. PRECISION

Not Playing the Two Hands at Once

My teachers have always scolded me for playing my left hand a little before my right. It is probably a very bad habit, but I do not hear it when I do it. How can I cure it?

This "limping," as it is called, is the worst habit you can have in piano playing, and you are fortunate in having a teacher who persists in his efforts to combat it. There is only one way to rid yourself of this habit, namely, by constant attention and closest, keenest listening to your own playing. You are probably misstating it when you say that you do not

"hear" it when you "limp"; it seems more likely to me that you do not listen. Hearing is a purely physical function which you cannot prevent while awake, while listening is an act of your will-power — it means to give direction to your hearing.

14. PIANO TOUCH *vs.* ORGAN TOUCH

How Organ-Playing Affects the Pianist

Is alternate organ and piano playing detrimental to the "pianistic touch"?

Inasmuch as the force of touch and its various gradations are entirely irrelevant on the organ, the pianist who plays much on the organ is more than liable to lose the delicacy of feeling for tone-production through the fingers, and this must, naturally, lessen his power of expression.

Organ-Playing and the Piano Touch

Is it true that a child beginning music lessons on an organ gets much better tone than one beginning on a piano, and does the side study of pipe-organ, after two years of extensive piano work, impair the piano touch?

It is only natural that a child can get better tone out of an organ than on a piano, because it is not the child but the

organ that produces the tone. If the child's purpose, however, is to learn piano-playing it would not be wise to let him begin on an organ, because this would leave the essential element — the art of touch — entirely undeveloped. And if his piano touch has been formed it can easily be undone again by letting him play on the organ.

15. FINGERING

The Universal System of Marking Fingering

In what respect does American fingering differ from foreign fingering, and which offers the greater advantages?

There is no "American" fingering. Many years ago the "English" fingering (which counts only four fingers and a thumb, and indicates the latter by a plus mark: +) was adopted by a few of the less prominent publishers in America; but it was soon abandoned. If you have a piece of sheet music with English fingering you may be certain that it is not of a recent edition, and I would advise you to obtain a more modern one. The advantage of the universal fingering lies in its greater simplicity, and in the circumstance that it is universally adopted.

The C-Scale Fingering for All Scales?

Do you advise the use of the C-scale fingering for all the scales? Is it practicable?

The C-scale fingering is not applicable to scales reposing on black keys because it creates unnecessary difficulties, the mastering of which would be a matter rather of mere sport than of art.

Fingering the Chromatic Scale

Which fingering of the chromatic scale is most conducive to speed and accuracy?

The right thumb always upon E and B, the left one upon F and C. Between times use three or four consecutive fingers as often as convenient. At the beginning of a long chromatic scale select such fingers as will most naturally bring you to one of the stations just mentioned.

The Fingers Needed to Play a Mordent

When executing the mordent, is not the use of three fingers preferable to two?

The selection of the fingers for the execution of a mordent depends always upon the preceding notes or keys which lead up to it. Since we cannot lift the hand just before a mordent for the purpose of changing fingers (for this would mean a rude interruption) we have to use whatever fingers happen to be "on

hand." An exchange of fingers in a mordent is seldom of any advantage, for it hampers precision and evenness, since, after all, each finger has its own tone-characteristics.

16. THE GLISSANDO

To Play a Glissando Passage

Will you describe the best method of holding the hand when playing glissando? Which is preferable to use, the thumb or the forefinger?

In playing glissando in the right hand use the index finger when going upward, the thumb when going downward. In the left hand — where it hardly ever occurs — use the middle finger in either direction, or, if you should find it easier, the index finger downward. The production of so great a volume of tone, as is possible on our modern piano, has necessitated a deeper fall of the keys than former pianos possessed, and this deeper dip has banished the glissando almost entirely from modern piano literature.

17. OCTAVES

How Best to Play the Octaves

Should I play octaves using the "hinge" stroke from the wrist or by using the arm? I find I can get more

tone by using the arm stroke, but cannot play so rapidly.

The character of the octaves must govern the selection of means to produce them. For light octaves use the wrist, for heavier ones draw more upon the arm. Rapidity requires that you avoid fatigue. If you feel fatigue approaching from too constant use of one joint, change to the other, and in doing this change also the position of the hand from high to low, and *vice versa.* For wrist octaves I recommend the low position of the hand, for arm octaves the high one.

Rapid Octaves

Please suggest some method of playing octaves rapidly to one who finds this the most difficult part of piano-playing. Would be grateful also for naming some octave études that could be used in the repertoire.

If rapid octaves seem to be "the most difficult part of piano-playing" to you, take it as an indication that they do not suit your nature. A "method" will never change your nature. This need not discourage you, however; it is only

to prevent you from trying to make a specialty of something for which you are not especially qualified and to save you a needless disappointment. Hold arms and hands in but a slight tension, and at the slightest fatigue change the position of the hand from high to low and *vice versa*. Your seat at the piano should not be too low. Study the first book of Kullak's Octave School, and, later on, the second book.

When Playing Octaves

When should I use the arm to play octaves as I have seen some concert players do? As I was watching them there did not seem to be the slightest motion from the wrist.

Most concert players play their octaves more from the arm than from the wrist, but their wrist is nevertheless not so inactive as it seems to have appeared to you. They have probably distributed the work over the wrist, the elbow, and the shoulder in such a way that each had to do only a part of it. Light octaves can come only from the wrist, while heavier ones put the elbow and shoulder into action. To make this distribution

consciously is hardly possible. A striving for economy of force and the least possible fatigue will produce this "division of labour" unconsciously.

Wrist Stroke in Long Octave Passages

When playing extended octave passages, such as the Liszt arrangement of "The Erlking," should the endeavour be to play all from the pure wrist stroke; or is it well to relieve the strain by an occasional impulse (a sort of vibration) from the forearm? Is there any advantage in varying the height of the wrist?

In extended octave playing it is well to vary the position of the wrist, now high and then low. The low position brings the forearm into action, while the whole arm coöperates when the wrist is held high. From the wrist alone such pieces as "The Erlking" cannot be played, because the wrist alone gives us neither the power nor the speed that such pieces require. Besides, the octaves, when all played from the wrist, would sound "cottony." The wrist alone is to be used only in light, graceful places.

Stiff Wrists in Playing Octaves

In playing octaves or other double notes my wrist seems to stiffen. How can I remedy this?

Stiffness in the wrist results from an unmindful use of it. When practising octaves or double notes think always of holding the arm and its joints in a loose, limber condition, and when you feel fatigued do not fail to stop until the muscular contraction is relieved. In a little while you will see your conscientious practising rewarded by acquiring an elasticity commensurate with your general physical status.

Premature Fatigue in the Arms

Why does it tire my arms when I play octaves and a continuation of little runs? How can I avoid it, so that they will feel free and easy?

Premature fatigue is usually caused by undue muscular contraction. Keep your arms and wrists loose and you will find that the fatigue disappears. For your sensation of fatigue may be due, not to exhaustion of muscular power, but to a stoppage of circulation caused by an unconscious stiffening of the wrist. Change the position of the wrist from

high to low and *vice versa* whenever you feel the "fatigue" coming on.

Kullak's "Method of Octaves" Still Good

Is Kullak's "Method of Octaves" still one of the best in its line? or can you recommend something better?

Since the days when Kullak's "School of Octaves" was printed, experience has taught us some things which might be added to it, but nothing that would contradict it. Nor, so far as I know, has anything better appeared in print than the first volume of that work especially.

18. REPETITION TECHNIQUE

The Difficulty of Playing Repetition Notes

Please help me about my repetition notes. When I wish to play them rapidly it seems that the key does not always produce a sound? Is it because of my touch?

First, examine the action of your piano. It occurs not infrequently that the fingers do their work well, but fail in the results because of an inert or lazy piano action. If, however, the fault does not lie in the instrument, it must lie in a certain stiffness of the fingers. To eliminate

this you need, first of all, a loose wrist. Furthermore, you should not, in repetition technique, let the fingers fall perpendicularly upon the keys, but with a motion as if you were wiping the keys with the finger-tips and then pull them quickly toward the palm of the hand, bending every joint of them rapidly.

19. DOUBLE NOTES

The Playing of Double Thirds

Please tell me something about the general practice of thirds, both diatonic and chromatic; also, about those in the first movement of the Grieg Concerto.

As the playing of passages in single notes requires a close single legato, to do double thirds requires an equally close double legato. As to the exact details of legato playing I may refer you to my book, "Piano Playing," where you will find the matter discussed at length in the chapter on "Touch and Technic."

THE INSTRUMENT

The Kind of Piano Upon Which to Practise

Is it irrelevant whether I practise upon a good or a bad piano?

For practice you should never use any but the very best available instrument.

Far, rather, may the piano be bad when you play for people. This will not hurt you nearly so much as will the constant and habitual use of a piano with a mechanism in which every key demands a different kind of touch, and which is possibly out of tune. Such conditions impair the development of your musical ear as well as of your fingers. It cannot be otherwise. As I said once before, learning means the acquiring of habits: habits of thinking and of doing. With a bad instrument you cannot develop any good qualities, even if you should possess them by nature; much less can you acquire them. Hence, I recommend a good piano, clean keyboard — for your æsthetic perceptions should be developed all around — a correct seat and concentration of mind. But these recommendations presuppose on the part of the student some talent and a good teacher.

Do Not Use a Piano Extreme in "Action"

Is it not better for a student in the advanced stage of study, who is preparing for concert work, to practise on a piano with a heavy action in order to

develop the finger and hand muscles, and to use an instrument with a light action for obtaining an artistic finish to the lighter passages occurring so often, for instance, in Chopin's music?

All extremes are harmful in their effects upon study and practice. A too heavy action stiffens and overtires the fingers, while too light an action tends to impair your control. Try to obtain for your practice a piano the action of which approximates as nearly as possible that of the piano on which you have to play in the concert, in order to avoid unpleasant surprises, such as premature fatigue or a running away of the fingers.

How Tight to Keep the Piano's Action

Should I keep the action of my piano tight?

Keep it tight enough to preserve the "feeling" of the keys under the fingers, but to make it more so would endanger your finger action and it may injure your hand.

The Action of a Beginner's Piano

Do you think it wise for a beginner to practise on a piano that has a heavy action?

That depends upon the age and physical development of the beginner. "Heavy" and "light" action are not absolute but relative terms, which comprise in their meaning the power of resistance in the player's hand. The action should be so adjusted that the player can — even in the softest touch — always feel the key under his finger. A too heavy action leads necessarily to an employment of the shoulder muscles (which should be reserved for brief, special uses) and may permanently injure the hand.

Playing On a Dumb Piano

Are mechanical appliances, such as a dumb keyboard, of advantage to the student of the piano? Should its use be restricted to a particular stage in the course of study?

Music is a language. Schumann said: "From the dumb we cannot learn to talk!" The totally dumb or mute piano should, therefore, not be used, or very little, if we aim at a "musical" technique — that is, a live, multicoloured technique qualified to express musical thought and feeling.

Personally I have never used a dumb piano.

THE PEDALS

A General Rule About the Pedal

Should I use the pedal with each melody note? Should like a general rule.

The treading upon the pedal should always follow immediately after the striking of the note for which it is intended, or else there will be discords arising from the mingling of that note with the one preceding it. This is the general rule. Exceptions there are, of course, but they occur only in certain moments when a mingling of tones is purposed for some special effect.

The Use of the Pedal for Colouring

What is the use of the damper pedal?

Primarily it serves to prolong such tones as we cannot hold with the fingers. But it is also one of the greatest means for colouring. The employment of it should always be governed by the ear.

How to Use the Pedal

Please tell me how to use the pedal. I find that in some pieces there is no mark under the measures to show me when it should be used. Is there any rule which you can give me?

Assuming that you have in mind the artistic use of the pedal, I regret to say that there is no more a rule for this than for the mixing of colours upon the palette of a painter who strives for some particular shade or tint. He knows that blue and yellow make green, that red and blue make purple; but those are ground colours which he can rarely use. For the finer shades he has to experiment, to consult his eye and his judgment. The relation between the pedal and the player's ear is exactly similar to that of the palette and the painter's eye. Generally speaking (from sad experience) it is far more important to know when *not* to use the pedal than when to use it. We must refrain from its use whenever there is the slightest danger of unintentional mingling of tones. This is best avoided by taking the pedal *after* striking the tone upon which it is to act, and to release it promptly and simultaneously with the striking of the next tone. It may be at once taken again, and this alternation must be kept up where there is either a change of harmony or a succession of "passing notes." This is the

only positive rule I can give, but even this is often violated. Let your ear be the guardian of your right foot. Accustom your ear to harmonic and melodic clarity, and — listen closely. To teach the use of the pedal independent of the action of your own ear is impossible.

Let Your Ear Guide Your Pedalling

In Weber's "Storm" should the pedal be held down throughout the entire piece, as directed? It produces quite a discord.

Without knowing this piece, even by name, I may say that the pianos of Weber's time had a tone of such short duration and volume that the discords resulting from a continuous use of the pedal were not so noticeable, as they are now upon the modern piano with its magnificent volume and duration of tone. Hence, the pedal must now be used with the utmost caution. Generally speaking, I say — again — that the ear is the "sole" guide of the foot upon the pedal.

Use Pedal With Caution in Playing Bach

Is Bach's music ever played with the pedal?

There is no piano-music that forbids the use of the pedal. Even where the

texture of a piece does not require the pedal — which happens very rarely — the player might employ it as an aid where the reach of his hand proves insufficient to hold all the parts of a harmony together. With Bach the pedal is often very important; for, by judicious use — as, for instance, in the cases of organ-point — it accumulates harmonic tones, holds the fundamental tone and thus produces effects not dissimilar to the organ. Qualitatively speaking, the pedal is as necessary in Bach's music as in any other; quantitatively, I recommend the utmost caution in its use, so as not to blur the fine texture of his polyphony.

The Student with a Fondness for the Pedal

I always want to use the pedal as soon as I take a new piece, but my teacher insists that I should get a good singing tone first. Is she right?

You "want" to use the pedal? In the face of your teacher's advice to the contrary? Then why did you apply for a teacher? People who consider their own pleasure while engaged in any kind of study need no teacher. They need discipline. Learn obedience! If

by following your teacher's advice you should fail to progress, even then you have no right to do anything else than go to another teacher. But he will in all probability not be very different from the first one in his precepts. Hence, I say again: You should learn obedience!

Using the Two Pedals at Once

May the damper pedal and the soft pedal be used simultaneously, or would this be detrimental to the piano?

Since the mechanisms of the two pedals are entirely separate and independent of each other you may use them simultaneously, provided that the character of a particular place in your piece justifies it.

To Produce a Softer Tone

Should the expresson "*p*" be executed by the aid of the soft pedal or through the fingers?

The soft pedal serves to change the quality of tone, not the quantity. It should therefore never be used to hide a faulty *piano* (or soft) touch. Mere softness of tone should always be produced by a decrease of finger-force and a lessening of the raising of the fingers. The soft pedal should be employed only

when the softness of tone is coupled with a change of colouring, such as lies within its range of action.

Do Not Over-Use the Soft Pedal

Should the Gavotte in A, of Gluck-Brahms, be played without the soft pedal? Does a liberal use of the soft pedal tend to make the student lazy in using a light touch?

Your first question is too general, as there is no piece of music that should be played entirely with or without the soft pedal; it is used only when a certain change of colouring is proposed. A too frequent use of the soft pedal does tend to a neglect of the *pianissimo* touch, and it should, therefore, be discouraged.

Once More the "Soft" Pedal

My piano has a rather loud tone to which my people object, and urge me to play with the soft pedal. I use it most of the time, but am afraid now to play without it. What would you advise?

If a soft touch and sound are liked, have the mechanism of your piano changed at the factory. I found myself in the bad condition at one time that I could not play certain passages independently of the position of my foot on

the soft pedal. Such is the strength of association that very soon a constant use of the soft pedal produces physical inability to play unless the foot is pressing the pedal.

PRACTICE

The Morning Practice On the Piano

In resuming my studies in the morning what should I play first?

Begin with your technical work. Scales in all tonalities, each at least twice well rendered. First slowly, one after another, then somewhat quicker, but never very quickly as long as you are not absolutely sure that both hands are perfectly even, and that neither false notes nor wrong fingerings occur. To play the scales wrong is just as much a matter of habit as to play them right — only easier. You can get very firmly settled in the habit of striking a certain note wrong every time it occurs unless you take the trouble of counteracting the formation of such a habit. After these scales play them in octaves from the wrist, slowly and without tiring it by lifting the hand to a needless height. After this play either Czerny or Cramer,

then Bach, and finally Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and so on. If you have the time to do it, play one hour in the morning on technical studies and use one hour for the difficult places in the works you are studying. In the afternoon play another hour, and this hour you devote to interpretation. I mean by this that you should now apply æsthetically what you have technically gained in the morning by uniting your mechanical advantages with the ideal conception which you have formed in your mind of the work you are studying.

Morning Is the Best Time to Practise

How much time should I spend on clearly technical study? I am practising three hours a day; how long should I practise at a time?

Purely technical work — that is, work of the fingers without the participation of mind and heart — you should do little or none, for it kills your musical spirit. If, as you say, you practise three hours a day I should recommend two hours in succession in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. The morning is always the best time for work. Make

no long pauses in your work, for they would break your contact with the piano and ti would take considerable time to reëstablish it. In the afternoon, after the major portion of your daily task is done, you may move with greater freedom, though even this freedom should be kept within proper bounds.

Time to Devote to Technical Exercises

Should I practise studies in general for my progress or should I confine myself strictly to my technical exercises?

Your strictly technical exercises should occupy one-quarter of the entire time you can give to your work. Two quarters you should use for the technical preparation of the difficult passages you encounter in the pieces you are studying, and during the last quarter these passages which have been thus prepared should be ranged into their proper places in the pieces, in order that you may not lose your view of the totality of the pieces while studying or practising details.

The Only Kind of Practice Worth While

In purely technical, *i. e.*, mechanical, practice may I have a book or a magazine on the music-stand and read?

This question will appear grotesque to

any one who has not thought of it, yet it is legitimate; for I know positively that this crime upon themselves has been committed by many. I cannot warn students too strongly against this pernicious habit. It is far better to practise only half as long, but with concentrated attention. Even purely mechanical matter must be transmitted to the motor-centres of the brain through the agencies of the ear and eye in order to bring beneficial technical results. If the brain is otherwise occupied it becomes insensible to the impression of the work in hand, and practise thus done is a complete waste of time. Not only should we not read, but also not think of anything else but the work before us, if we expect results. Concentration is the first letter in the alphabet of success.

Practising Eight Hours Instead of Four

Will I advance quicker by practising eight hours instead of four, as I do now?

Playing too much in one day has often a deteriorating effect upon one's studies, because work is profitable, after all, only if done with full mental concentra-

tion, which can be sustained only for a certain length of time. Some exhaust their power of concentration quicker than others; but, however long it may have lasted, once it is exhausted all further work is like unrolling a scroll which we have laboriously rolled up. Practise self-examination, and if you notice that your interest is waning — stop. Remember that in studying the matter of quantity is of moment only when coupled with quality. Attention, concentration, devotion, will make unnecessary any inquiries as to how much you ought to practise.

Playing With Cold Hands

Shall I, when my hands are cold and stiff, play at once difficult and fatiguing things in order to limber them up?

In forcing things with cold hands you always run the danger of overstraining, while with a gradual limbering you may safely try the same tasks with impunity. Handle the piano lightly while the hands are cold, and increase both force and speed only when the hands have gained their normal temperature and elasticity. This may take half or even three-

quarters of an hour. It may be accelerated by putting the hands in hot water before playing, but this should not be done too often, because it is apt to weaken the nerves of the hands.

Counting Out Loud

Is counting aloud injurious to a pupil's playing — that is, does not the sound of the voice confuse the pupil in getting the correct tone of the note struck?

Loud counting can hardly ever be injurious — especially not while the pupil is dealing with time and rhythm. This part mastered or fully understood, the audible counting may be lessened and finally abandoned. During practice loud counting is of inestimable value, for it develops and strengthens rhymthic feeling better than anything else will, and, besides, it is an infallible guide to find the points of stress in a phrase.

The Study of Scales Is very Important

Must all study of the piano absolutely begin with the study of scales?

Scales should not be attempted until a good finger-touch has been formed and the very important action of the thumb in the scale has been fully prepared.

After that, however, I consider the practising of scales important, not only for the fingers, but also for the discipline of the ear with regard to the feeling of tonality (key), understanding of intervals, and the comprehension of the total compass of the piano.

The Study of the Scales

Do you approve of the study of all the fifteen major scales by piano students, or is the practice of the enharmonic ones unnecessary?

One should learn everything in that line in order to select from one's store of learning that which the occasion calls for. Study or practise all scales as they are written, and later also in thirds, sixths, and octaves.

When Reading Over a New Piece

When studying a new composition, which is preferable: to practise first with separate hands or together?

When first looking over a new composition both hands should be employed, if possible, for this is necessary to obtain, approximately, at least, a mental picture of it. If the player's technique is too insufficient for this the deciphering

must, of course, be done for each hand separately.

Practising the Two Parts Separately

When I am learning a new piece should the hands practise their parts separately?

Provided you have formed a general idea of the piece, it is well to practise the hands separately, because you can, in this way, concentrate your attention upon the work of each hand. As soon, however, as each hand knows its work the hands should play together in order now to pursue the musical purpose for which the separate practice was only a technical preparation.

Four Ways to Study a Piano Piece

Should a composition be studied away from the piano?

There are four ways to study a composition:

1. On the piano with the music.
2. Away from the piano with the music.
3. On the piano without the music.
4. Away from the piano without the music.

2 and 4 are mentally the most taxing and fatiguing ways, no doubt; but they

also serve best to develop the memory and what we mean by "scope," which is a faculty of great importance.

The Conditions Which Dictate Speed in Playing

How fast or slow should Schubert-Liszt's "*Auf dem Wasser zu singen*" be played? What modern parlour pieces would you recommend after Bendel's "Zephyr"?

Even if I did believe in metronomes, as I do not, I could not indicate speed for you or for anybody, because it will always depend upon the state of your technique and the quality of your tone. For modern parlour pieces I suggest the two volumes of Russian piano music published by G. Schirmer, New York. You will find pieces of various degrees of difficulty there from which you may select what suits you best.

To Work Up a Fast Tempo

Which is the best way to work up a fast tempo?

The best help is to hear the piece or part which you have in mind played quickly by another person, for this aids you in forming the mental concept of it, which is the principal condition to

which all ability is subject. There are, however, other ways which each one of us must find for himself: either by a gradual increase of speed until you reach your individual maximum or by starting at once at full tilt, even though some notes should drop under the piano and then be picked up in subsequent repetitions. Which of these two or any other ways is best for you no one can tell; your musical instinct will guide you if you follow it cautiously.

The Best Way to Work Up a Quick Tempo

Is it ever a waste of time to practise a piece over and over again for months as slowly as a beginner and with utmost concentration? After having done so and gradually working up a tempo, I then find I cannot play so fast as I want to. Is it not wise to begin all over again as slowly as possible? I prefer to work this way, but have been told that one gets "stale," studying the same music for a long time.

Do you advise practising with or without the pedal?

Slow practice is undoubtedly the basis for quick playing; but quick playing is

not an immediate result of slow practice. Quick playing must be tried from time to time, with increasing frequency and heightened speed, even at a temporary loss of clearness. This loss is easily regained by subsequent returns to slow practice. After all, we must first learn to think quickly through the course of a piece before we can play it quickly, and this mental endeavour, too, will be greatly aided by occasional trials in a quicker tempo. As for getting "stale," a variety of pieces is necessary to preserve the freshness of each one.

Regarding the pedal, I suggest that you use it judiciously from the very beginning of the study of a new piece; though never in finger exercises.

Watch Your Breathing

What is the purpose of associating breathing with piano playing, and to what extent should it be practised?

Breathing is as important in piano playing as in all physical exertion, and more so when we speak of pieces that entail the use of great muscular force; for this causes a quickening in the action of the heart; respiration naturally keeps

step with it, and the result is often a forcible breathing through the mouth. Players resort to open-mouth breathing in such cases because they cannot help themselves. If, at the last spurt of a bicycle race, we should call to the wheelmen, "Breathe through the nose!" we could not wonder if our advice remains unheeded. This open-mouth breathing, however, need not be learned; it is the self-help of nature. I recommend breathing through the nose as long as possible. It is more wholesome than mouth-breathing, and it refreshes the head more. When physical exertion becomes too great then you will neither need nor heed my advice or anybody's; your nature will find its own line of least resistance.

Take a Month's Rest Every Year

Must I keep up my practice during my Christmas holidays of a month?

If you have worked well on your development during the spring, summer, and autumn it will be to your advantage to stop your practising entirely for a month. Such a pause renews your forces as well as the love for your work, and

you will, upon resuming it, not only catch up quickly with what you may think to have missed, but you will also make a quick leap forward because the quality of your work will be better than it could be if you had persisted in it with a fatigued mind. In a tired condition of mind and body we are very apt not to notice the formation of bad habits, and since "to learn means to form correct habits of thinking and doing" we must beware of anything that might impair our watchfulness as to bad habits. The greatest persistence cannot turn a bad habit into a virtue.

MARKS AND NOMENCLATURE

The Metronome Markings

What is the meaning of M. M. = 72 printed over a piece of music?

The M stands for "metronome," the other for the name of its inventor, Maelzl. The figures indicate the number of beats a minute and the note shows what each beat represents — in this case a quarter note. The whole annotation says that the average speed of the piece should admit of seventy-two quarter notes being played in a minute. I advise you, how-

ever, rather to consult the state of your technique and your own feeling for what is musically right in deciding upon the speed of the piece.

The Personal Element and the Metronome

In Chopin's Prelude No. 15 is the movement in C-sharp minor to be played in the same tempo as the opening movements, or much faster? How should the 6-8 and 9-8 movements of Liszt's Dance of the Gnomes be metronomized?

The C-sharp minor movement should not increase in speed, or only very little, because it rises to a considerable height dynamically, and this seems to counteract an increase of speed. As to the metronoming, I would not bother about it. The possibilities of your technique must ever regulate the speed question in a large degree. Tempo is so intimately related with touch and dynamics that it is in a large measure an individual matter. This does not mean that one may play andante where an allegro is prescribed, but that one person's allegro differs slightly from that of another person. Touch, tone, and conception influence the tempo. The metronome

indications are to be accepted only with the utmost caution.

Metronome Markings May Better Be Ignored

How fast, by metronome, should the minuetto of Beethoven's Sonatina, opus 49, Number 2, be played?

If you possess an edition of Beethoven that has no metronome marks you have been singularly fortunate, and I would not for the world interfere with such rare good luck. Consult your technique, your feelings, and have confidence in your good sense.

There are Dangers in Using a Metronome

How should one use the metronome for practising? I have been warned against it, as my teacher tells me one is liable to become very stiff and mechanical by the persistent use of it.

Your teacher is eminently right. You should not play with the metronome for any length of time, for it lames the musical pulse and kills the vital expression in your playing. The metronome may well be used as a controlling device first, to find the approximate average speed of a piece, and, second, to convince yourself that, after playing for a

while without it, your feelings have not caused you to drift too far away from the average tempo.

The Real Meaning of Speed Terms

What is the meaning of the words Adagio, Andante, and Allegro? Are they just indications of speed?

They serve as such; though our musical ancestors probably selected these terms because of their indefiniteness, which leaves a certain margin to our individuality. Literally, Adagio (*ad agio*) means "at leisure." Andante means "going" in contradistinction to "running," going apace, also walking. Allegro (a contraction of *al leg-gie-ro*) means with "lightness, cheerful." Primarily these terms are, as you see, indications of mood; but they have come to be regarded as speed annotations.

A Rule For Selecting the Speed

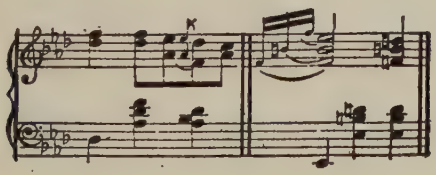
As the words "largo," "allegro," etc., are supposed to indicate a certain rate of speed, can you give a rule so that a student who cannot have the aid of a teacher will be able to understand in what time he should play a composition?

If the metronome is not indicated you

have to consult your own good taste. Take the most rapid notes of your piece, play them rapidly as the general trend of the piece will æsthetically permit, and adjust the general tempo accordingly.

How Grace Notes Are Played

How are the grace notes played in these measures from Chopin's Valse, opus 42, and when are grace notes not struck simultaneously with the base?



Grace notes and their chiefs — that is, those notes to which the grace notes are attached — should ever be played with one and the same muscular impulse. The time occupied by the grace notes should be so minimal that it should not be discernible whether they appear simultaneously with the base note or slightly before it. In modern music it is usually meant to precede the bass note, though the good taste of the player may occasionally prefer it otherwise.

Rests Used Under or Over Notes

What is the meaning of a rest above or below the notes of the treble clef?

The rests you speak of can occur only when more than one voice (or part) is written in the same staff, and they indicate how long the entrance of the other voice is to be delayed.

What a Double Dot Means

What does it mean when a note is double-dotted, like I thought first it was a misprint, but it seems to occur too frequently for that.

As the first dot prolongs the note by one-half of its own value, so does the second dot add one-half of the value of the first dot. A half-note with one dot lasts three-quarters, with two dots it lasts seven-eighths.

Should I accent the first note under a slur thus or should I lift my hand at the end of the slur thus

The Playing of Slurred Notes

Slurs and accents have nothing to do with each other, because accents relate to rhythm, while slurs concern the touch. The last note under a slur will usually be slightly curtailed in order to create

that small pause which separates one phrase from another. Generally speaking, the slur in piano music represents the breathing periods of the vocalist.

How a Tie and a Slur Differ

What difference is there between a slur and a tie?

None in appearance, but much in effect. A tie continues the sound of the note struck at its beginning as long as the note-value at its end indicates. It can be placed only upon two notes of similar name in the same octave which follow each other. As soon as another note intervenes the tie becomes a slur and indicates a *legato* touch.

Slurs and Accents Not Related

How should the beginning of slurs be accented?

Slurs and accents have nothing to do with each other. Slurs indicate either a legato touch or the grouping of the notes. Which one of the notes thus grouped is to be accented depends upon its rhythmical position in the measure. The strong and weak beat (or positive and negative beat) govern the accent always, unless there is an annotation to

the contrary, and such an annotation must be carried out with great judiciousness, seldom literally.

How Long an Accidental Affects a Note

Where there is an accidental on the last beat of a measure does not that note resume its signature beyond the bar unless tied? The case I speak of was in a key of two flats, common time. The fourth beat, E, was naturalized and the first note of the next measure was E with the flat sign. I maintain that the flat sign is superfluous, and I should like to know if this is right?

You are quite right, theoretically. Nevertheless, the proper tonality signature of a note that was changed is very frequently restated when the same note recurs beyond the bar. Though this special marking is not necessary theoretically, practical experience has shown that it is not an unwise precaution.

"E-Sharp and B-Sharp" and the Double Flat

What is the meaning of the sharps on the E and B line, and of a double-flat? Are they merely theoretical?

They are not theoretical, but orthographical. You confound the note C

with the key on the keyboard by that name. B-sharp is played upon the key called C, but its musical bearing is very remote from the note C. The same applies to double-flats (and double-sharps), for D with a double-flat is played upon the key called C, but it has no relation to the note C. This corresponds precisely with the homonym in language: "sow" — "sew" — "so" — sound alike, but are spelled in various ways according to the meaning they are to convey.

The Effect of Double Flats

How is an octave, written thus, to be played?

As the single-flat lowers a note by a half-tone, so a double-flat lowers it by two half-tones or a full tone.

Double Sharp Misprinted for Double Flat

In playing an operetta recently I found the double-sharp sign (×) used for double-flats as well. Is this correct?

The sign may be a misprint. But if it should occur repeatedly I advise you to make quite sure, before taking the misprint for granted, that the sign is not, after all, meant for a double-sharp.

When an Accidental Is in Parentheses

Please tell me how a chord or an interval marked thus is executed. What does an accidental in parentheses mean?

Chords marked as above are slightly rolled in the same manner as if marked by a serpentine line, unless the sign denotes a linking with the other hand. Which of the two meanings is intended you will easily infer from the context. Accidentals in parentheses are mere warnings given by some composers wherever there is a possibility of doubt as to the correct reading caused by a momentary harmonic ambiguity. I have found these accidentals in parentheses so far only in the works of French composers.

The Staffs Are Independent of Each Other

Does an accidental in the right hand influence the left?

Inasmuch as piano music is written in score form, the two staffs are as independent of each other as are the staffs in an orchestral score. We may, in cases of suspected misprints, draw certain inferences from one staff to the other, provided that they are justified by the prevailing harmony. As a rule, the two

staffs are independent of each other in regard to accidental chromatic signs.

Why Two Names for the "Same" Key?

I am often asked why there must be fifteen keys in music instead of twelve—that is, why not always write in B instead of C-flat, in F-sharp instead of G-flat, in D-flat instead of C-sharp, or *vice versa?* I can only say that the circle of fifths would not be complete without the seven scales in sharps and the seven in flats: but Bach does not use all the fifteen keys in his Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues, omitting entirely, in the major keys, G-flat, D-flat, and C-flat, and, in the minor keys, A-sharp and A-flat. Are compositions in sharps considered more brilliant than those in flats? Do composers consider modulation in selecting their key?

The answer to your question hinges upon whether you recognize in music mere tone-play or whether you concede a mental and psychic side to it. In the former case the mode of spelling a tone C-sharp or D-flat would be, indeed, irrelevant. But in the latter case you must admit the necessity of a musical

orthography qualified to convey distinct tonal meanings and musical thoughts to the reader and to the player. Though there is in the tempered scale no difference between C-sharp and D-flat, the musical reader will conceive them as different from one another, partly because of their connection with other related harmonies. These determine usually the composer's selection in cases of enharmonic identities. In the script of human language you will find an analogy than which none could be more perfect. In English there are, for instance, "to," "too," and "two"; words in which the spelling alone, and not the sound of pronunciation, conveys the different meanings of the words.

The Meaning and Use of "Motif"

What is the meaning of a "motif"? What does a dash mean over a note? What is the best book of instruction for a beginner, a child of ten?

A motif is the germ of a theme. A theme may be composed of reiterations of a motif, or by grouping several motifs together; it may also combine both modes of procedure. The most glorious

exemplification of construction by reiteration of a motif you will find in the opening theme of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. A dash over a note enjoins the player to hold that note with the finger until it has received its full value. The best "instruction book" for a child is a good teacher who uses no instruction book, but imparts his knowledge to the child from out of his own inner consciousness.

Tied Staccato Notes

In playing notes written thus is it permissible to slide the fingers from the keys or should there be only a clinging touch?

Notes marked as above are to be played in such a manner that each note is slightly separated from the next. The best touch for this is from the arm, so that the fingers are not lifted from their joints, nor from the wrist, but that the arm pulls the finger upward from the key.

The "Tenuto" Dash and Its Effect

What do short lines below or above a note or chord mean in contradistinction to a staccato or an accent? And does it affect the whole chord?

The dash under or above a note is a substitute for the word "tenuto" (usually abbreviated into "ten."), which means "held," or, in other words, be particular about giving this note its full sound-duration. This substitute is usually employed when the holding concerns a single note or a single chord.

A Rolled Chord Marked "Secco"

How should I execute a chord that is written with a spread and also marked "secco"? — as in Chaminade's "Air de Ballet, No. 1."

Roll the chord as evenly as possible in all its parts; but use no pedal and do not hold it, but play it briskly and short.

Small Notes Under Large Ones

What is the meaning of small notes printed under large ones?

Usually the small notes are an indication that they may be omitted by players who have not the stretch of hand necessary to play them.

Accenting a Mordent in a Sonata

How should one play and accent the mordent occurring in the forty-seventh measure of the first movement — allegro di molto — of Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique, Opus 13?

The accent ought to lie upon the first note of the mordent, but you should not make a triplet of it by occupying the whole quarter with its execution. The mordent must be played fast enough to preserve the rhythmic integrity of the melody-note.

The Position of the Turn Over a Note

The turn ∾ stands sometimes directly over the note and sometimes farther to the right of it. Does this difference indicate different executions and, if so, how would the two turns have to be played?

The turn always begins with its uppermost note. When it stands directly over a note it takes the place of this note; when more to the right the note is struck first and the turn, judiciously distributed at the time of its disposal, follows.

How Are Syncopated Notes to be Played?

How are syncopated notes to be played?

Notes occurring an entire beat of the prescribed time are, when syncopated, to be played between the beats. If the syncopated notes occupy only a fraction

of the beats they are played between the fractional beats.

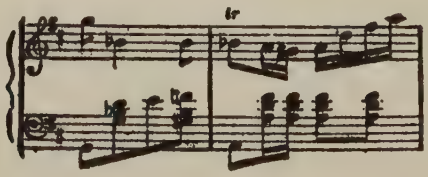
A Trill Begins on the Melodic Note

In modern compositions should all trills begin upon the note which is written, presuming there is no appoggiatura before the note? Is the alternation of the thumb and the second finger desirable in the playing of a trill?

Where not expressly otherwise stated (by appoggiatura) trills usually begin upon the melodic tone (the note which is written). Change fingers when those employed get tired. For extended trills the use of three fingers is advantageous, while in shorter trills two fingers will preserve more clarity.

Position of Auxiliary Note in a Trill

In the accompanying example of the trill should the auxiliary note be a tone or a half-tone above the principal note? If the half-tone, what would be the name of the auxiliary note?



The episode you quote moves evidently in the tonality of G minor. The trill stands on B-flat. As the auxiliary note of a trill is ever the diatonic sequel of a stated note it must, in this case, be a whole tone above B-flat, namely C. Since the piece is written in D major there should have been a "natural" marked under the sign of the trill.

Speed and Smoothness in Trilling

Will you kindly suggest a good method of gaining speed and smoothness in trilling?

While there are no "methods" for trilling there are certain means by which sluggish muscles may be assisted. Yet, even these means cannot be suggested without knowing the seat and cause of your trouble. The causes differ with the individual, but they are, in the majority of cases, purely mental, not manual. To trill quickly we must think quickly; for if we trill only with the fingers they will soon stick, lose their rhythmic succession, and finish in a cramped condition. Hence, there is no direct way to learn trilling; it will develop with your general mental-musical advancement. The main thing is, of course,

always to listen to your own playing, actually and physically, to perceive every tone you play; for only then can you form an estimate as to how quickly you can "hear." And, of course, you do not expect to play anything more quickly than your own ear can follow.

Difference in Playing Trills

What is the difference in the manner of playing the trill in measure 25, and those in measures 37 and 38, of the Chopin Polonaise, Opus 53?

The significance of the trill in measure 25 is melodic, while that of the trills in measures 37 and 38 is purely rhythmic, somewhat in the nature of a snare-drum effect. The first trill requires greater stress on the melodic note, while in the other two you may throw your hand, so to speak, on both notes and roll the trill until it lands upon the next eighth-note.

The Meaning of Solfeggio

What is meant by "spelling" in music?

Unless it means the variety of ways in which most chords can be written it refers to an oral reciting of notes, properly called solfeggio.

ABOUT CERTAIN PIECES AND COMPOSERS

Some Pieces for a Girl of Fourteen

Please tell me some pieces of the classics which are not too difficult for my daughter of fourteen to play. She has a great deal of talent but not much technique. The Kuhlau Sonatinas she can play very well.

If your daughter is fourteen years old and has — as you say — much talent but little technique, it is high time to think of developing her technique, for a pianist without technique is like a pleasure traveller without money. At any rate, I should prefer the easier sonatas by Haydn and Mozart to those of Kuhlau, because of their greater intrinsic merit. Any good teacher will assist you in selecting them to fit your daughter's case.

In Playing a Sonata

In playing sonatas my teacher tells me it is a great fault if I neglect to observe the repeat marks. I have heard it said by others that the repetition is not necessary, though it may be desirable. Will you please give me your opinion?

In a sonata it is of serious importance to repeat the first part (exposition) of the first movement in order that the

two principal themes, as well as their tributaries, may well impress themselves upon the mind and memory of your auditor. For, unless this is accomplished, he cannot possibly understand and follow their development in the next part. That the exposition part is not the only one to be repeated you will find frequently indicated; for instance, in the last movement of the "Appassionata," where the repetition is needful, not for the reason stated before, but for the sake of formal balance or proportion. Generally speaking, I am in favour of following the composer's indications punctiliously, hence, also, his repeat marks, which serve æsthetic purposes that you will perhaps not understand until later, when the sonata has, in your hands, outgrown the stage of being learned.

A Point in Playing the "Moonlight Sonata"

Should not the notes of the triplet figure in Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" be so blended into each other that you do not hear them in separate notes, but as a background, so to speak, for the notes in the melody?

The truth lies midway between two extremes. While the accompaniment should be sufficiently subdued to form, as you say, a harmonic background, it ought, nevertheless, not to be blended to such a degree as to obliterate entirely the undercurrent of a triplet motion. The accumulation of each chord should be produced through the pedal, not through an excessive legato touch.

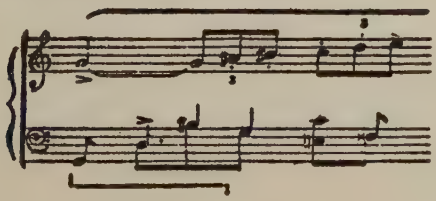
Playing the "Spring Song" too Fast

Should Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" be played in slow or fast time?

It is marked "Allegretto grazioso." The latter term (graceful, in English) precludes a too-quick movement.

What a Dot May Mean

This is the seventh measure of Chopin's Polonaise, Opus 26, No. 1. What is the meaning of the dot placed after the D in the bass? Whenever this measure is repeated the dot occurs, or I should have thought it a misprint.



The left-hand notes follow each other as eighth-notes. Their respective duration, however, is indicated by the upward stems and the dot. It is intended here that a complete chord should be built up by accumulation, as in illustration *a:*

and I would also hold the fifth eighth as in illustration *b*.

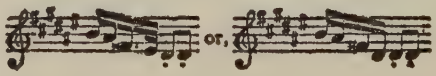
Where the Accent Should be Placed

In playing Chopin's Impromptu in A-flat, Opus 29, should the first or the last note of the mordent receive the accent? I have heard the mordent sound like a triplet? Is this the correct accent?

The last note of the mordent should be accented in this case.

A Disputed Chopin Reading

In Chopin's Nocturne in F-sharp, after the *Doggio* Movement, when returning to Tempo I, and counting five measures, should the right hand in the fifth measure play this melody?



The various editions differ from one another in this measure. Peters's edition, generally considered the best edition of Chopin's works, has the second version, which commends itself by its greater naturalness.

Playing the "Melody in F"

In Rubinstein's "Melody in F" should the melody be played in the left hand or be divided between the two hands?

Where there is no valid reason for doing otherwise it is always best to follow the composer's prescription; for, in most cases — and with great composers in all cases — the author knows what he meant to say. In the aforesaid piece, too, I advise you to adhere to this principle, since it is written with a view to teach the division of the melody between the right and left hand. Any other execution would ruin this purposed design.

When Two Fingers Have the Same Note

In Schumann's "Blumenstück," third number, the uppermost notes of the left hand are identical with the lowest of the right hand. Should the thumbs of both hands strike the same keys at the same

time all the way through or should the left hand omit them?

The left hand should omit them, but be careful to omit only those that are really duplicates. There are a few places toward the end of each section where the left-hand notes differ from those in the right. In those cases you must be careful to play all the notes that are written.

BACH

The Beginner in Bach Music

Can you give me a few helpful suggestions in a preliminary study of Bach?

A totality consists of many parts. If you cannot master the totality of a work by Bach try each part by itself. Take one part of the right hand, one part of the left, add a third part, and so on until you have all the parts together. But be sure to follow out the line of each separate part (or "voice," as the Continentals say). Do not lose patience. Remember that Rome was not built in a day.

Bach's Music Necessary to Good Technique

Do you think the study of Bach is necessary to the development of one's technique, or should one let his music alone until a later day when one's tech-

nique is in good condition? Some of his music seems so dry.

Bach's music is not the only music that develops the technique. There is, for instance, the music of Czerny and Clementi to be considered. But Bach's music is particularly qualified to develop the fingers in conjunction with musical expression and thematic characterization. You may start with Czerny and Clementi, but you ought soon to turn to Bach. That some of his music seems dry to you may be due to your mental attitude by which you possibly expect from ecclesiastical music what only the opera can give you. Think yourself into his style and you will find a mine of never-dreamed-of enjoyment.

Always Keep in Touch with Bach

Do you think that the playing of Bach's works will keep one's hands in good technical condition? And which is the best edition of Bach's piano works?

Bach is good for the soul as well as for the body, and I recommend that you never lose touch with him. Which is the best edition would be hard to

say, but I have found the Peters edition to be very good.

Bach's Preludes and Fugues

What is the plan of a "Fugue," how does it differ from an "Invention" and "Prelude," and what is the purpose of studying the pieces so named by Bach?

The explanation of the plan of a Fugue would exceed by far the limits of the space at my disposal. It would require a text-book, of which there are many to be found in every good music store. The Fugue is the most legitimate representation of true polyphony. Its difference from an Invention is expressed in the two names. A Fugue (*fuga*, flight) is the flight of one musical thought through many voices or parts, subject to strict rules, while an Invention is an accumulation of thoughts moving with absolute freedom. The definition of Prelude, as something which intentionally precedes and fittingly introduces a main action, fits the musical Prelude perfectly; especially in the case of Bach. The purpose of all these forms is that of all good music-making, namely, the

purification and development of good taste in music.

As to the Bach Fugues

Of the Bach fugues do you consider the C sharp major difficult to memorize, or do you advise the use of the D flat arrangement instead?

Such little differences have never bothered me, and I can therefore hardly answer your question definitely. It has been frequently observed — though never explained — that to many people it comes easier to read music in D flat than in C sharp. Hence, if you prefer the D flat edition it will reduce the difficulty for you. Possibly this more accessible version may aid you optically or visually in your work of memorizing.

BEETHOVEN

Order of Studying Beethoven's Sonatas

I am just beginning to reach an intelligent interpretation of Beethoven's music. Now, in what order should the Sonatas be studied?

If you should really have the laudable intention to study all the Sonatas of Beethoven for your repertory I should think that you may safely take them up

very much in the order in which they are printed, with the exception of Opus 53 and the Appassionata, which — spiritually as well as technically — rank with the last five. The Steingräber edition, however, furnishes a very fair order of difficulty in the index to the Sonatas.

The Beethoven Sonata with a Pastoral Character

My teacher calls the Sonata opus 28, by Beethoven, the "Pastoral" Sonata. I have not found anything "pastoral" in any of the movements. Is it because I do not understand it, or is the name a mere amateurish invention?

The name "Pastoral Sonata" could, no doubt, be traced to an arbitrary invention, perhaps of some over-smart publisher endeavouring to heighten the attractiveness of the Sonata to the general public by the addition of a suggestive title. Yet it seems to fit the Sonata pretty well, because, really, its main characteristic is a rural sort of peaceful repose. Especially the first movement is of a tranquillity which, surely, does not suggest the life of a metropolis. But in the other movements, too, there are many episodes which by their naïveté

and good-natured boisterousness indicate the life of the village.

A Few, Well Played, Are Enough

Must I play all the Sonatas of Beethoven's in order to become a good player, or is a certain number of them sufficient, and, if so, how many would you advise?

Since the playing of all the Sonatas does not necessarily prove that they were all well played, I think it is better to play one Sonata well than to play many of them badly. Nor should Beethoven's Sonatas be regarded as a musical drilling-ground, but rather as musical revelations. As they are not all on precisely the same high plane of thought, it is not necessary to play them all. To familiarize yourself with Beethoven's style and grandeur of thought it is sufficient to have mastered six or eight of his Sonatas; though that number, at least, should be *mastered.*

MENDELSSOHN

The Study of Mendelssohn

In a complete course for a piano student should the study of Mendelssohn be included? Which of his compositions are the most useful?

Mendelssohn is surely a composer who is not to be omitted. His melody alone, besides other virtues, entitles him to be included, for melody seems to grow scarce nowadays. To develop a fine cantilena his "Songs Without Words" of slower motion, for instance, are just the thing.

CHOPIN

What Is the Best of Chopin?

Which are the best compositions of Chopin to study by one who really desires to know him?

All the Etudes, all the Preludes, the Ballades in A flat, G minor and F minor, the Berceuse and the Barcarolle. The Mazurkas, Nocturnes, Waltzes, and Polonaises you are probably familiar with; hence, I mention the aforesaid other works. Generally speaking, of Chopin a pianist should know everything.

The Charm of Chopin's Touch

What kind of touch did Chopin have?

Since a description of his touch would require too much space I refer you to the book from which I gathered the most explicit information on this point. It is "The Life of Chopin," by Frederick

Niecks (London and New York, Novello, Ewer & Co.), and in the second volume, from page 94 to about 104, you will find what you wish to know, as far as it is possible to convey the charm of one art through the medium of another. Since you seem interested in Chopin I would recommend that you closely study both volumes of this masterly biographical work.

Mood and Tempo in the A-Flat Impromptu

What is the tempo (by metronome) of Chopin's Impromptu in A-flat, and what idea did the composer embody in it?

The editions vary in their metronome markings and I believe none of them. Your tempo will largely depend upon the state of your technique. To the second question my reply is that Chopin has composed "music" which — as you know — represents thoughts only in a musical sense, otherwise it deals with purely psychic processes, moods, etc. The humour of this Impromptu is mainly an amiable, ingratiating one, here and there slightly tinged with a sweet melancholy. It should not be played too fast, for it easily loses this latter attribute

and then sounds like a Czerny exercise. A moderate tempo will also tend to bring out the many charming harmonic turns which, in too quick a tempo, are likely to be lost.

Chopin's Barcarolle

In Chopin's Barcarolle there is a number of trills preceded by grace notes. Are they to be executed according to Philipp Emmanuel Bach's rule, so that the grace notes take their time from the note that follows them?

Philipp Emmanuel Bach's rule is a safe one to follow, but do not confound a rule with a law. If you have reached that plane on which an attempt at the Barcarolle by Chopin is rational, you must feel that your individual taste will not lead you too far astray even if it should prompt you occasionally to depart from the rule.

Chopin's Works for a Popular Concert

What works of Chopin would you suggest for a popular concert programme?

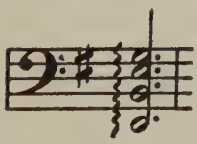
Nocturne, Opus 27, No. 2; Fantasy Impromptu, Opus 66; Scherzo, Opus 31; Berceuse, Opus 57; Valse, Opus 64, No. 2; Polonaise, Opus 26, No. 1; Chants Polonais (in Liszt's transcription).

Taking Liberties with the Tempo

In playing Chopin may one take liberties with the tempo and play different parts of the same mazurka or nocturne in various degrees of tempo?

Undoubtedly. But the extent of such liberties depends upon your æsthetic training. In principle your question admits of an affirmative reply, but a specific answer is impossible without an acquaintance with your musical status. I recommend that you be very cautious about "taking liberties"; without, however, ceasing altogether to follow the promptings of your good taste here and there. There is such a thing as "artistic conscience"; consult it always before taking a liberty with the tempo.

Omitting One Note in a Chord

In the beginning of the Waltz in E minor by Chopin the left hand has to play this chord  a number of times. I can stretch any three of the four notes, but not all four. Can one of them be omitted, and which one?

You may omit the upper E, the second note from the top, but you may do so only so long as it is physically impossible

for you to strike all the four notes. For, by omitting this note you do alter the tone colour of the chord as well as its sonority. As soon as you have acquired the requisite stretch — and anybody who does possess it — I would advise that the note be not unnecessarily omitted. Chopin evidently meant to have that note played.

Masters Cannot be Studied in Order

Will you give me your views as to the order in which the masters of piano composition should be studied?

To classify composers, without specifying their works, is never advisable. Beethoven's first and last sonatas differ so fundamentally from each other in every particular that one may play the first one very well and yet be for many years (perhaps forever) unable to play the last one. And still, it is the same Beethoven that wrote both works. We can, therefore, hardly speak of an "order of composers." So long as we are dealing with masters the question should not be: Which master? — but, Which composition does your stage of mental and technical development call for? If you will defer the study of any other com-

poser until you have fully mastered the works of Beethoven — only the principal ones, at that — you will need a life of more length than the Bible allots to the average man.

The Greatest Composers as Pianists

Is it true that nearly all the great composers have been pianists?

If by pianists you mean musicians whose sole medium of audible musical utterance was the piano, your question admits of no other than an affirmative reply. The only exception I can think of just now was Berlioz; there were, no doubt, others, but none who belongs to the truly great ones. The reason for this is, perhaps, the circumstance that the pianist throughout his education is brought into touch with greater polyphony than the players of other instruments, and that polyphony is a basic principle in music.

The Study of Operatic Transcriptions

Is the study of Thalberg's operatic transcriptions of any value to the piano student?

Operatic transcriptions begin with Liszt. What was written before him in that line

(and in some degree contemporary with him, hence it includes Thalberg) is hardly of any significance. If you feel a special inclination toward the transcriptions of Thalberg you may play them; they will not harm you so very much. But if you ask me whether they are of any musical value I must frankly say, no.

Modern Piano Music

Are such pieces as "Beautiful Star of Heaven" or "Falling Waters" in good taste? What contemporary composers write good piano music?

Pieces with pretentious names are usually devoid of such contents as their names imply, so that the names are merely a screen to hide the paucity of thoughts and ideas. Speaking very generally, there seems to be not very much good music written for the piano just at present. By far the best comes from Russia. Most of these compositions are rather difficult to play, but there are some easy ones to be found among them, such as the "Music Box," by Liadow, "Fantastic Fairy Tales," No. 12, by Pachulski, and others.

EXERCISES AND STUDIES

Exercises for the Beginner to Practise

Is there any special book of practice exercises that you think best for a beginner and that you would care to recommend?

Any reliable music publisher will tell you which book of exercises is most in demand. The effect of the exercises depends, of course, upon the way you play them. Indications as to touch, etc., are usually given in such books. What kind of exercises your case demands cannot be determined without a personal examination by an expert.

Good Finger Exercises

What would you say are the best studies for plain finger work?

The exercises of "Pischna" are to be recommended. They have appeared in two editions, or which one is abridged. They are known as the "large" and the "small Pischna." You may obtain them through any large music house, I think, in the Steingräber Edition.

The Value of Heller's Studies

Are Heller's studies practical for a young student lacking in rhythm and expression?

Yes, they are very good, provided the

teacher insists that the pupil plays exactly what is indicated and does not merely "come near it."

Good Intermediate Books of Etudes

Living in the country, where there is no teacher available, I would thank you for telling me what Etudes I ought to study. I have finished those by Cramer and Moscheles, and can play them well, but find those by Chopin too difficult. Are there no intermediate works?

You seem to be fond of playing Etudes. Well, then, I suggest:

"Twelve Etudes for Technique and Expression," by Edmund Neupert.

"Concert Etudes," by Hans Seeling (Peters Edition).

"Etudes," by Carl Baermann (two books), published in Germany.

"Etudes," by Ruthardt (Peters Edition).

But why not select an easy Etude by Chopin and make a start? The best preparation — if not the Etudes themselves — is Heller's Opus 154.

Etudes For Advanced Players to Work at

What regular technical work would you prescribe for a fairly advanced pianist — one who plays pretty well such

things as the Chopin Etudes in C minor, Opus 10, No. 12, and in D flat, Opus 25, No. 8, and the B flat minor prelude?

My advice to advanced players is always that they should construct their technical exercises out of such material as the different places in the pieces at hand furnish. If you should feel the need of Etudes for increasing your endurance and control of protracted difficult passages I suggest that you take up the Etudes by Baermann and those by Kessler. The former are a little easier than the latter.

The Value of Clementi's "Gradus" To-day

My first teacher laid great store by Clementi's "Gradus ad Parnassum," and insisted upon taking every study in it, while my new teacher, with whom I recently started lessons, says that it is "outlived, superannuated." Was my old or my new teacher right?

They were both right; one as a pedagogue, the other as a musician. As you do not mention the reason of your first teacher's insistence, I must assume that he employed the "Gradus" as exercises, pure and simple. It serves this purpose

quite well, though even as studies for the applying of technical disciplines they are, on account of their dryness, "outlived," as your new teacher correctly says. Modern writers have produced studies which combine with their technical usefulness greater musical value and attractiveness.

POLYRHYTHMS

Playing Duple Time Against Triple

How must I execute triplets played against two-eighths? In Clementi's Sonatina, Opus 37, No. 3, first page, you will find such bars.

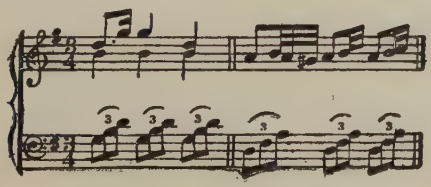
In a slow tempo it may serve you to think of the second eighth-note of the triplet as being subdivided into two sixteenths. After both hands have played the first note of their respective groups simultaneously, the place of the aforesaid second sixteenth is to be filled by the second note of the couplet. In faster motion it is far better to practise at first each hand alone and with somewhat exaggerated accents of each group until the two relative speeds are well established in the mind. Then try to play the two hands together in a sort of semi-automatic way. Frequent correct repe-

tition of the same figure will soon change your semi-automatic state into a conscious one, and thus train your ear to listen to and control two different rhythms or groupings at the same time.

The Two Hands Playing Different Rhythms

How should, in Chopin's Fantasy Impromptu, the four notes of the right be played to the three of the left? Is an exact division possible?

An exact division would lead to such fractions as the musician has no means of measuring and no terms for expressing. There is but one way to play unequal rhythms simultaneously in both hands; study each hand separately until you can depend upon it, and put them together without thinking of either rhythm. Think of the points where the two hands have to meet, the "dead points" of the two motions, and rely on your automatism until, by frequent hearing, you have learned to listen to two rhythms at once.



The Old Problem of Duple Time Against Triple

How should the above-quoted notes be brought in with the lower triplets?

It would be futile to attempt a precise and conscious division in such cases. The best, in fact, the only, way to do is to practise the hands separately with an exaggerated accent on each beat until the points where the hands meet are well conceived and the relative speed ratios are well understood. Then try to play the hands together, and do not be discouraged if the first attempts fail. Repeat the trial often and you will finally succeed if the separate practice has been sufficient to produce a semi-automatic action of the hands.

PHRASING

The Value and Correct Practice of Phrasing

Can you give an amateur a concise definition of phrasing and a few helpful suggestions as to clear phrasing?

Phrasing is a rational division and subdivision of musical sentences, and serves to make them intelligible. It corresponds closely with punctuation in literature and its recitation. Find out the start, the end, and the culminating point of your phrase. The last-named

is usually to be found upon the highest note of the phrase, while the former are usually indicated by phrasing slurs. Generally speaking, the rising of the melody is combined with an increase of strength up to the point of culmination, where, in keeping with the note design, the decrease of strength sets in. For artistic phrasing it is of the utmost importance properly to recognize the principal mood of the piece, for this must, naturally, influence the rendition of every detail in it. A phrase occurring in an agitated movement, for instance, will have to be rendered very differently from a similar-looking phrase in a slow, dreamy movement.

Do Not Raise Wrist in Marking a Rest

In observing a rest should the hand be raised from the wrist?

Never! Such a motion should be made only in rapid wrist octaves or other double notes when a staccato is prescribed. The regular way to conclude a phrase, or observe a pause, as you say, is to lift the arm from the keyboard and keep the wrist perfectly limp, so that the arm carries the loosely hanging hand upward.

RUBATO

As to Playing Rubato

Will you please tell me what is the best method of playing rubato?

The artistic principles ruling rubato playing are good taste and keeping within artistic bounds. The physical principle is balance. What you shorten of the time in one phrase or part of a phrase you must add at the first opportunity to another in order that the time "stolen" (rubato) in one place may be restituted in another. The æsthetic law demands that the total time-value of a music piece shall not be affected by any rubato, hence, the rubato can only have sway within the limits of such time as would be consumed if the piece were played in the strictest time.

How to Play Passages Marked "Rubato"

I find an explanation of *tempo rubato* which says that the hand which plays the melody may move with all possible freedom, while the accompanying hand must keep strict time. How can this be done?

The explanation you found, while not absolutely wrong, is very misleading, for it can find application only in a very few isolated cases; only inside of one

short phrase and then hardly satisfactorily. Besides, the words you quote are not an explanation, but a mere assertion or, rather, allegation. *Tempo rubato* means a wavering, a vacillating of time values, and the question whether this is to extend over both hands or over only one must be decided by the player's good taste; it also depends upon whether the occupation of the two hands can be thought of as separate and musically independent. I assume that you are able to play each hand alone with perfect freedom, and I doubt not that you can, with some practice, retain this freedom of each hand when you unite them, but I can see only very few cases to which you could apply such skill, and still less do I see the advantage thereof.

Perfect Rubato the Result of Momentary Impulse

In playing *rubato* do you follow a preconceived notion or the impulse of the moment?

Perfect expression is possible only under perfect freedom. Hence, the perfect *rubato* must be the result of momentary impulse. It is, however, only a few very eminent players that have such command

over this means of expression as to feel safe in trusting their momentary impulses altogether. The average player will do well carefully to consider the shifting of time values and to prepare their execution to a certain degree. This should not, however, be carried too far, as it would impair the naturalness of expression and lead to a stereotyped mannerism.

The Difference Between Conception and Rubato

Is there any difference between conception and *rubato?*

Conception is a generic term and comprises the service of each and all means of expression, among which *rubato* plays a somewhat prominent part. For it is, so to speak, the musical pulse-beat of the player. Being subordinate to conception, its function and manner must be governed by the latter.

CONCEPTION

Different Conceptions May be Individually Correct

Can one and the same phrase be conceived differently by different artists and still be individually correct in each instance?

Certainly! Provided that — whatever the conception be — it preserves the

logical relations of the parts in building up the phrase, and that it is carried through the whole course of the piece in a consistent manner. Whether a certain conception of a phrase is or is not compatible with the general character of the piece and how far the freedom of conception may extend, it will be for the æsthetic training and the good taste of the player to determine for each and every case separately.

Which Should Come First—Conception or Technique?

In the first attempts at a new piece must matters of conception be observed at once or only after the piece has been technically mastered?

Unless one is a very experienced reader it will be hardly possible to think of matters of conception until the technical means to express them and the necessary perspective of the piece have been gained. It is always safer first to make sure that the notes as such, and their respective times value have been read correctly, and that the technical difficulties have, to a fair degree, been overcome. This done, the question must be settled as to whether the general character

of the piece is dramatic, *i. e.*, tragic or conciliatory, melancholy, lyric, rhapsodic, humorous, or changeable, and so forth. Only when our mind on this point is made up with the utmost definiteness, can we approach the details that are conditioned by the conception.

FORCE OF EXAMPLE

Hearing a Piece Before Studying It

Should a pupil hear a piece played before studying it?

If the pupil's imagination needs stimulation he should hear the piece well played before studying it. If, however, he is merely too lazy to find out the rhythm, melody, and so forth, and rather relies upon his purely imitative faculty, he should not hear it, but be compelled to do his own reading and thinking.

THEORY

Why the Pianist Should Study Harmony

Do you recommend the study of harmony and counterpoint to the piano student?

By all means! To gain a musical insight into the pieces you play you must be able to follow the course of their harmonies and understand the contrapuntal treatment of their themes. With-

out the knowledge gained through a serious study of harmony and counter-point your conceptions will be pure guesswork and will lack in outline and definiteness.

Why so Many Different Keys?

Why is it supposed to be necessary to have fifteen keys to complete the circle of fifths? Why would not twelve suffice, and thus avoid duplicate keys?

Not fifteen, but twenty-five tonalities complete the circle of fifths, theoretically, and they are all necessary because of the many harmonic turns that occur in modern music and which could not be intelligently demonstrated unless we use the tonalities with seven, eight, nine or more sharps and flats. For otherwise we might have to change the signature so frequently as to become utterly confusing to even the most musicianly reader. C-sharp minor has but four sharps, yet the scale of its dominant (its next relative) has eight sharps.

The Relation of Harmony to Piano-Playing

Is it absolutely necessary for me to study harmony in connection with my piano? My teacher wants me to do it, but I don't see the use! Of what benefit is harmony?

Of what benefit is the general school-work a child has to go through? To play the piano well a good hand and so many hours of practice are not sufficient; it requires a general musical education. This means, first and foremost, a knowledge of harmony, to which you may later add the study of counterpoint and forms. Your teacher is absolutely right.

Text-Books on Harmony

Would you care to recommend two or three of the best books on the study of harmony?

The doctrine of harmony is ever the same, but the modes of teaching it are constantly changing and, I trust, improving. For this reason I feel a certain hesitation in recommending at this time the text-books which I studied many years ago, especially as I am not certain that they have been translated into English. I advise you, therefore, to inquire of some good teacher of harmony or, at least, of a reliable music publisher or dealer. E. F. Richter and Bussler wrote works of recognized merit, which, though no longer modern, may be safely studied.

Learning to Modulate

Is it possible to learn modulating from a book without the aid of a teacher, so as to connect two pieces of different tonality?

Possible, yes, but not probable; for since in your written exercises you are likely to err at times, you will need some one to point out your errors and so show you the way to correct them. Generally speaking, I do not think much of studying the rudiments of anything without the aid of an experienced adviser.

Studying Counterpoint by One's Self

Is it possible to study counterpoint without a teacher, and, if so, what book can you recommend for its study?

It is quite possible, provided you are certain never to misunderstand your text-book and never to commit any errors. Otherwise you will need the advice of an experienced musician in correcting them. A good teacher, however, is always better than a book for this study. Of text-books there are a great many. Any reliable music house will furnish you with a list of them.

Should Piano Students Try to Compose?

Besides my study of the piano shall I try to compose if I feel the inclination and believe I have some talent for it?

The practice of constructing will always facilitate your work of reconstructing, which is, practically, what the rendition of a musical work means. Hence, I advise every one who feels able to construct even a modest little piece to try his hand at it. Of course, if you can write only a two-step it will not enable you to reconstruct a Beethoven Sonata; still, there may be little places in the Sonata that will clear up in your mind more quickly when you have come in touch with the technical act of putting down on paper what your mind has created, and you will altogether lose the attitude of the absolute stranger when facing a new composition. Do not construe this, however, as an encouragement to write two-steps!

The Student Who Wants to Compose

Please advise me as to the best way of learning composition. Which is the best work of that kind from which I could learn?

First learn to write notes. Copying

all sorts of music is the best practice for that. Then study the doctrine of harmony. Follow it up by a study of the various forms of counterpoint. Proceed to canon in its many kinds and intervals. Take up the fugue. Then study forms until you learn to feel them. Books for every one of these stages there are many, but better than all the books is a good teacher.

The Difference Between Major and Minor Scales

What is the difference between the major and minor scale? Does it lie in the arrangement of semitones or in the character, or in both?

There are three differences: First, in the arrangement of the semitones; second, in the character; and, third, in the circumstance that the minor scale admits of a number of modifications for melodic purposes which cannot be made in the major scale.

There is Only One Minor Scale

Which is the true minor scale, the melodic or the harmonic? My teacher insists upon the harmonic, but it sounds ugly to me. Will you please tell me something about it?

There is but one minor scale; it is the one upon which the chords of its tonality are built; it is the one upon which your teacher wisely insists, because the so-called melodic minor scale offers no new intervals to your fingers, and because the term melodic minor scale is applied to that form of deviation from the real scale which is most frequently used, but which is by no means the only deviation that is possible; nor is it the only one in use.

What is the Difference Between the Major and Minor Scales?

What is the difference between the major and minor scales?

The major scale has a major third and sixth, while the minor scale has a minor third and sixth and raises its seventh to a major seventh by an accidental elevating sign, raising a natural note by a sharp, and a flat note by a natural. If you begin your major scale upon its sixth degree and, counting it as the first of the minor, raise the seventh, you obtain the minor scale, in which, however, many modifications are admissible for melodic (though not for harmonic) purposes.

How Waltz, Menuet, Mazurka, and Polonaise Differ

As a waltz and a menuet are both in three-fourth time, is it only the tempo in which they differ, or are there other differences?

Waltz, menuet, mazurka, and polonaise are all in three-fourth time and are not confined to a definite tempo. The difference between them lies in the structure. A waltz period — that is, the full expression of a theme — needs sixteen measures; a menuet needs only eight, a mazurka only four measures. In a mazurka a motive occupies only one measure, in the menuet two, and in the waltz four. The polonaise subdivides its quarters into eighths, and the second eighth usually into two sixteenths; it differs, therefore, from the other three dances by its rhythm.

The Meaning of "Toccata"

What is the meaning of the word "Toccata"? I do not find it in the Italian lexicon and the English musical dictionaries differ widely in their definitions. None of their definitions seems to apply to the Toccata by Chaminade.

To make the matter quite plain let me say, first, that "Cantata" (from

cantare — to sing) meant in olden times a music piece to be sung; while "Sonata" (from *suonare* — to play) designated a piece to be played on an instrument; and "Toccato" meant a piece for keyboard instruments like the organ or piano and its precursors, written with the intention of providing special opportunities for the display of the skill of touch (from *toccare* — to touch) or, as we would now say, finger technique. The original meanings have changed so that these terms now imply definite forms, like the modern Cantata and Sonata. The Toccata is, at present, understood to be a piece in constant and regular motion, very much like those that are called "*moto perpetuo*" or "perpetual motion," of which Weber's "Perpetuum mobile" is a good example. I have no doubt that the Toccata by Chaminade, which I do not know, is written on similar lines.

THE MEMORY

Playing from Memory Is Indispensable

Is memorization absolutely essential to a good player?

Playing from memory is indispensable to the freedom of rendition. You have

to bear in your mind and memory the whole piece in order to attend properly to its details. Some renowned players who take the printed sheets before them on the stage play, nevertheless, from memory. They take the music with them only to heighten their feeling of security and to counteract a lack of confidence in their memory — a species of nervousness.

The Easiest Way to Memorize

Will you please tell me which is the easiest way to memorize a piano piece?

Begin by playing it a few times very carefully and slowly until you can play it with a fair degree of exactitude (you need not mind an occasional stopping). Then go over such places as appeared to you especially complex until you understand their construction. Now let the piece rest for a whole day and try to trace in your mind the train of thoughts in the piece. Should you come to a dead stop be satisfied with what you have achieved. Your mind will keep on working, subconsciously, as over a puzzle, always trying to find the continuation. If you find that the memory is a blank

take the music in hand, look at the particular place — but only at this — and, since you have now found the connection, continue the work of mental tracing. At the next stop repeat this procedure until you have reached the end, not in every detail, but in large outlines. Of course, this does not mean that you can now *play* it from memory. You have only arrived at the point of transition from the imagined to the real, and now begins a new kind of study: to transfer to the instrument what you have mentally absorbed. Try to do this piece by piece, and look into the printed sheets (which should not be on the music-rack but away from it) only when your memory absolutely refuses to go on. The real work with the printed music should be reserved to the last, and you should regard it in the light of a proof-reading of your mental impressions. The whole process of absorbing a piece of music mentally resembles that of photographing. The development of the acoustic picture (the tone-picture) is like the bath. The tentative playing is like the process of "fixing" against

sensitiveness to lights; and the final work with the printed music is the retouching.

In Order to Memorize Easily

I find it very hard to memorize my music. Can you suggest any method that would make it easier?

To retain in one's memory what does not interest one is difficult to everybody, while that which does interest us comes easy. In your case the first requirement seems to be that your interest in the pieces you are to play be awakened. This interest usually comes with a deeper understanding of music; hence, it may be said that nothing will assist a naturally reluctant memory so much as a general musical education. Special studies for the memory have not come to my knowledge because I never had any need of them. After all, the best way to memorize is — to memorize. One phrase to-day, another to-morrow, and so on, until the memory grows by its own force through being exercised.

Memorizing Quickly and Forgetting as Readily

I memorize very easily, so that I can often play my pieces from memory before I have fully mastered their technical difficulties, as my teacher

says. But I forget them just as quickly, so that in a few weeks I cannot remember enough of them to play them clear through. What would you advise, to make my memory more retentive?

There are two fundamental types of memory: One is very mobile — it acquires quickly and loses just as quickly; the other is more cumbrous in its action — it acquires slowly, but retains forever. A combination of the two is very rare, indeed; I never heard of such a case. A remedy against forgetting you will find in refreshing your memory in regular periods, playing your memorized pieces over (carefully) every four or five days. Other remedies I know not and I see no necessity for them.

To Keep Errors from Creeping in

I can always memorize a piece before I can play it fast. Do you advise practising with notes when I already know it by heart?

The occasional playing of a memorized piece from the notes will keep errors from creeping in, provided you read the music correctly and carefully.

SIGHT READING

The Best Way to Improve Sight-Reading

Is there any practical method that will assist one to greater rapidity in sight-reading?

The best way to become a quick reader is to read as much as possible. The rapidity of your progress depends upon the state of your general musical education, for the more complete this is the better you will be able to surmise the logical sequel of a phrase once started. A large part of sight-reading consists of surmising, as you will find upon analyzing your book-reading.

To Gain Facility in Sight-Reading

What is a good plan to pursue to improve the facility in sight-reading?

Much reading and playing at sight and as fast as possible, even though at first some slight inaccuracies may creep in. By quick reading you develop that faculty of the eye which is meant by "grasp," and this, in turn, facilitates your reading of details.

ACCOMPANYING

Learning to Accompany at Sight

How can one learn to accompany at sight?

Develop your sight-reading by playing

many accompaniments, and endeavour — while playing your part — also to read and inwardly hear the solo part.

The Art of Accompanying a Soloist

How should one manage the accompaniment for a soloist inclined to play rubato?

Since you cannot make a contract of artistically binding force with a soloist you must take refuge in "following." But do not take this word in its literal meaning; rather endeavour to divine the intentions of your soloist from moment to moment, for this divining is the soul of accompanying. To be, in this sense, a good accompanist, one must have what is called in musical slang a good "nose" — that is, one must musically "scent" whither the soloist is going. But, then, the nose is one of the things we are born with. We may develop it, as to its sensitiveness, but we cannot acquire a nose by learning. Experience will do much in these premises, but not everything.

Learning the Art of Accompanying

Wishing to become an accompanist I anticipate completing my studies in Berlin. What salary might I expect and what would be the best "course" to pursue?

An experienced and very clever accompanist may possibly earn as much as fifty dollars a week if associated with a vocal, violin, or 'cello artist of great renown. Usually, however, accompanists are expected to be able to play solos. There are no special schools for accompanists, though there may be possibly some special courses in which experience may be fostered. If you come to Berlin you will find it easy to find what you seem to be seeking.

TRANSPOSING

The Problem of Transposing at Sight

What, please, is the quickest and safest way of transposing from one key to another? I have trouble, for instance, in playing for singing if the piece is in A major and the singer wants it in F major.

The question of transposing hinges on the process of hearing through the eye. I mean by this that you must study the piece until you learn to conceive the printed music as sounds and sound groups, not as key pictures. Then transfer the sound picture to another tonality in your mind, very much as if when moving from one floor to another with

all your household goods you were to place them on the new floor as they were placed on the old. Practice will, of course, facilitate this process very much. Transposition at sight is based on somewhat different principles. Here you have to get mentally settled in the new tonality, and then follow the course of intervals. If you find transposition difficult you may derive consolation from the thought that it is difficult for everybody, and that transposing at sight is, of course, still more difficult than to transpose after studying the piece beforehand.

PLAYING FOR PEOPLE

When to "Play For People"

During the period of serious study may I play for people (friends or strangers) or should I keep entirely away from the outside world?

From time to time you may play for people the pieces you have mastered, but take good care to go over them afterward — the difficult places slowly — in order to eliminate any slight errors or unevenness that may have crept in. To play for people is not only a good incentive for further aspirations; it also

furnishes you with a fairly exact estimate of your abilities and shortcomings, and indicates thereby the road to improvement. To retire from the outside world during the period of study is an outlived, obsolete idea which probably originated in the endeavour to curb the vanity of such students as would neglect their studies in hunting, prematurely, for applause. I recommend playing for people moderately and on the condition that for every such "performance" of a piece you play it afterward twice, slowly and carefully, at home. This will keep the piece intact and bring you many other unexpected advantages.

"Afraid to Play Before People"

I can never do myself justice when playing for people, because of my nervousness. How can I overcome it?

If you are absolutely certain that your trouble is due to "nervousness" you should improve the condition of your nerves by proper exercise in the open air and by consulting your physician. But are you quite sure that your "nervousness" is not merely another name for self-consciousness, or, worse yet, for a

"bad conscience" on the score of technical security? In the latter case you ought to perfect your technique, while in the former you must learn to discard all thought of your dear self, as well as of your hearers in relation to you, and concentrate your thinking upon the work you are to do. This you can well achieve by will-power and persistent self-training.

Effect of Playing the Same Piece Often

I have heard artists play the same piece year after year, and each time as expressively as before. After a piece has been played several hundred times it can hardly produce on the player the same emotional effect that it originally did. Is it possible for a player by his art and technical resources so to colour his tones that he can stimulate and produce in his audience an emotional condition which he himself does not at the time feel?

In music emotion can be conveyed only through the means and modes of expression that are peculiar to music, such as dynamic changes, vacillations of tempo, differences of touch and kindred devices. When a piece is played in public very often on consecutive occa-

sions — which artists avoid as much as they can — these expressions gradually assume a distinct form which is quite capable of preservation. Though it will in time lose its life-breath, it can still produce a deception just as (to draw a drastic parallel) a dead person may look as if he were only asleep. In this parallel the artist has, however, one great advantage. Since he cannot play a piece very often without having a number of errors, rearrangements, slight changes creeping into it, he must, in order to eliminate them and to cleanse the piece, return from time to time to slow practice in which he also refrains almost entirely from expression. When in the next public performance the right tempo and expression are added again they tend strongly to renew the freshness of the piece in the player's mind.

The Pianist Who Fails to Express Herself

I love music dearly and my teacher is always satisfied with my lessons, but when I play for my friends I never make a success. They compliment me, but I feel they that do not care for my playing; even my mother says that my playing is "mechanical." How can I change it?

It is just possible that your friends and your mother may not be amenable to the high class of music which you play, but if this is not the case your affliction cannot be cured offhand. If the lack of expression in your playing should emanate from a lack of feeling in yourself, then your case would be incurable. If, however, you play "mechanically" because you do not know how to express your emotions in your playing — and I suspect it to be so — then you are curable, although there are no remedies that would act directly. I suggest that you form close associations with good musicians and with lovers of good music. By looking well and listening you can learn their modes of expression and employ them first by imitation until the habit of "saying something" when you play has grown upon you. I think, though, that you need an inward change before there can be any outward change.

The Art of Playing With Feeling

In the musical manifestations of feeling how does the artist chiefly differ from the amateur?

The artist expresses his feelings with due deference to the canons of art. Above all, he plays correctly without allowing this ever-present correctness to make his playing seem lacking in feeling. Without unduly repressing or suppressing his individuality he respects the composer's intentions by punctiliously obeying every hint or suggestion he finds in the annotations, concerning speed, force, touch, changes, contrasts, etc. He delivers the composer's message truthfully. His personality or individuality reveals itself solely in the way he understands the composition and in the manner in which he executes the composer's prescriptions.

Not so the amateur. Long before he is able to play the piece correctly he begins to twist and turn things in it to suit himself, under the belief, I suppose, that he is endowed with an "individuality" so strong as to justify an indulgence in all manner of "liberties," that is, licence. Feeling is a great thing; so is the will to express it; but both are worthless without ability. Hence, before playing with feeling, it were well to make

sure that everything in the piece is in the right place, in the right time, strength, touch, and so forth. Correct reading — and not only of the notes *per se* — is a matter that every good teacher insists upon with his pupils, even in the earliest grades of advancement. The amateur should make sure of that before he allows his "feelings" to run riot. But he very seldom does.

Affected Movements at the Piano

Is there any justification for the swaying of the body, the nodding of the head, the exaggerated motion of the arms, and all grotesque actions in general while playing the piano, so frequently exhibited not only by amateurs but by concert players, too?

All such actions as you describe reveal a lack of the player's proper self-control when they are unconsciously indulged in. When they are consciously committed, which is not infrequently the case, they betray the pianist's effort to deflect the auditors' attention from the composition to himself, feeling probably unable to satisfy his auditors with the result of his playing and, therefore,

resorting to illustration by more or less exaggerated gesture. General well-manneredness, or its absence, has a good deal to do with the matter.

ABOUT THE PIANO PER SE

Is the Piano the Hardest to Master?

Do you believe that the piano is the most difficult of all instruments to master — more so than the organ or the violin? If so, why?

The piano is more difficult to master than the organ, because the tone-production on the piano is not so purely mechanical as it is on the organ. The pianist's touch is the immediate producer of whatever variety or colour of tone the moment requires, whereas the organist is powerless to produce any change of tone colour except by pulling a different stop. His fingers do not and cannot produce the change. As to string instruments, their difficulties lie in an entirely different field, and this fact precludes comparison with the piano. Technically, the string instrument may be more difficult, but to become an exponent of musical art on the piano requires deeper study, because the pianist must present

to his hearers the totality of a composition while the string instruments depend for the most part upon the accompaniments of some other instruments.

Piano Study for Conductor and Composer

Being a cornet player, and wishing to become a conductor and composer, I should like to know if the study of the piano is necessary in addition to my broad, theoretical studies and a common college course.

It depends upon what you wish to conduct and what to compose. With no other means of musically expressing yourself than a cornet it is highly improbable that you will be able to write or conduct a symphony. But you may be able to lead a brass band and, perhaps, to write a march or dance piece. If your musical aims are serious by all means take to the piano.

Why the Piano Is So Popular

Why do more people play the piano than any other instrument?

Because the rudimentary stages of music study are easier on the piano than on any other instrument. The higher stages, however, are so much more difficult, and it is then that the piano

gets even with the bold aggressor. A violinist or 'cellist who can play a melody simply and with good tone is considered a fairly good amateur, for he must have mastered the difficulty of tone-production; he must have trained his right arm. A pianist who can play a melody equally well is the merest tyro. When he approaches polyphony, when the discrimination begins between the various parts speaking simultaneously, aye, then the real work begins — not to speak of velocity. It is, perhaps, for this reason that in reality there are a great many more violinists than pianists, if by either we mean persons who really master their instrument. The number of 'cellists is smaller, but the reason for this is to be found in the small range of 'cello literature and also, perhaps, in the comparative unwieldiness of the instrument, which does not admit of technical development as, for instance, the more handy violin. If all beginners at the piano realized what exasperating, harassing, discouraging, nerve-consuming difficulties await them later and beset the path to that mastery which so few

achieve, there would be far fewer piano students and more people would study the violin or the 'cello. Of the harp and the wind instruments I need not speak, because they are to be considered only in matters orchestral and not — seriously — as solo instruments.

The Genuine Piano Hand

What shape of hand do you consider the best for piano playing? Mine is very broad, with rather long fingers.

The best piano hand is not the popular, pretty, narrow hand with long fingers. Nearly all the great technicians had or have proportioned hands. The genuine piano hand must be broad, in order to give each finger a strong base for the action of its phalanges and to give this base space enough for the development of the various sets of muscles. The length of the fingers must be in proportion to the width of the hand, but it is the width which I consider most important.

The Composition Must Fit the Player

Would you advise players with small hands to attempt the heavier class of compositions by Liszt?

Never! Whether the hands are too

small or the stretch between the fingers too narrow — if you attempt a piece which for these or other physical reasons you cannot fully master, you always run the serious risk of overstraining. This, however, should be most carefully avoided. If you cannot play a certain piece without undue physical strain, leave it alone and remember that singers choose their songs not because they lie within their compass, but because they suit their voice. Do likewise. Be guided by the nature and the type of your hand rather than by its rapidity of execution.

The Best Physical Exercise for the Pianist

What physical exercises are most advantageous to be taken in connection with piano practice? I have been swinging clubs to strengthen wrists and arms, but have imagined it stiffened my fingers.

I am inclined to think that what you imagined was not far from the truth. Can you not replace the real clubs by imaginary ones? Since club-swinging tends to develop the agility of the arms and wrists rather than their strength you can easily make the same motions without the clubs; for all exertion of

force that keeps the hands in a closed condition is bound to have a bad effect on piano playing. Undoubtedly the best exercise of all, however, is brisk walking in the open air, for it engages every part and every organ of the body, and by compelling deep breathing it fosters the general health through increased oxygenation.

Horseback Riding Stiffens the Fingers

My teacher objects to my riding horseback; not altogether, but he says I overdo it and it stiffens my fingers. Is he right?

Yes, he is. Every abuse carries its own punishment in its train. The closed position of the hand, the pressure of the reins upon the fingers, as constant as it is the case in horseback riding, is surely not advantageous for the elasticity of the fingers. You should, therefore, allow the effect of one ride upon your fingers to disappear completely before you indulge in another.

When to Keep Away from the Piano

Do you think I should play and study the piano just because it is asked of me, and when I take no interest in it?

Most emphatically, no! It would be

a crime against yourself and against music. What little interest in music you may have left would be killed by a study that is distasteful to you, and this would be, therefore, bound to lead to failure. Leave this study to people who are sincerely interested in it. Thank heaven, there are still some of those, and there always will be some! Be sure, however, that you are really not interested, and discriminate well between a lack of interest and a mere opposition to a perhaps too strenuous urging on the part of your relatives. My advice would be to quit the study for a time entirely; if, after a while, you feel a craving for music you will find the way to your instrument. This advice, of course, holds good also for violin students or any type of music student.

BAD MUSIC

The Company That One Keeps in Music

Must I persist in playing classical pieces when I prefer to play dance music?

If, in your daily life, you wish to be regarded as a lady or a gentleman you are obliged to be careful as to the company you keep. It is the same in musical life.

If you associate with the noble thoughts that constitute good — or, as you call it, classical — music, you will be counted with a higher class in the world of music. Remember that you cannot go through a flour-mill without getting dusty. Of course, not all pieces of dance music are bad; but the general run of them are such poor, if not vulgar, stuff as hardly to deserve the name of "compositions." Usually they are mere "expositions" of bad taste. Of these I warn you for your own sake, and if you wish to avoid the danger of confounding the good and the bad in that line it is best to abstain from it entirely. If dance music it must be, why, have you never heard of the waltzes and mazurkas by Chopin?

Why Rag-Time Is Injurious

Do you believe the playing of the modern rag-time piece to be actually hurtful to the student?

I do, indeed, unless it is done merely for a frolic; though even such a mood might vent itself in better taste. The touch with vulgarity can never be but hurtful, whatever form vulgarity may assume — whether it be literature, a

person, or a piece of music. Why share the musical food of those who are, by breeding or circumstance, debarred from anything better? The vulgar impulse which generated rag-time cannot arouse a noble impulse in response any more than "dime novels" can awaken the instincts of gentlemanliness or ladyship. If we watch the street-sweeper we are liable to get dusty. But remember that the dust on the mind and soul is not so easily removed as the dust on our clothes.

ETHICAL

What the Object of Study Should Be

How can we know that our talent is great enough to warrant us in bestowing year after year of work upon its development?

Pleasure and interest should be such that it is in the actual working that one is repaid. Do not think so much of the end of your work. Do not force your work with the one view of becoming a great artist. Let Providence and the future decide your standing in music. Go on studying with earnestness and interest, and find your pleasure in the endeavour, not in the accomplishment.

PITCH AND KINDRED MATTERS

The International Pitch

What is meant by "pitch" as regards piano tuning? People say that a certain piano is pitched lower than another. Would E on one piano actually sound like F on another?

Yes, it would if the pianos were not pitched alike. It is only recently that an international pitch has been established which was adopted everywhere except in England. In the international pitch the A in the second space of the treble staff makes 435 vibrations a second.

The "International" Piano Pitch

Which piano pitch is preferable, "concert" or "international"?

By all means the "international," because it will fit your piano to be used in conjunction with any other instrument, no matter whence it may come. Besides, the international pitch was decided upon as far back as 1859, in Paris, by a government commission, numbering among its members such men as Auber, Halévy, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Ambroise Thomas, and many physicists and army generals. You can easily infer from this that, in determining that the

A in the second space of the treble staff should have 435 vibrations a second, all phases of music — vocal, instrumental, string, brass, wood, wind — have been duly considered.

The Well-Tempered Piano Scale

Is there really a difference of three-eighths of a tone between A-sharp and B-flat on the piano?

There is no difference on the piano. But acoustically there is a difference, over which, however, I would waste no time, since the evenly-tempered scale has been generally adopted, and every composition from Bach's time to the present day has been thought and written in it.

The "Colour" of Various Keys

Is it not a mistaken idea that any one particular key is more or less rich or melodious than another?

The effect of a tonality upon our hearing lies not in its signature (as even Beethoven seemed to believe) but in the vibration proportions. It is, therefore, irrelevant whether we play a piece upon a high-pitched piano in C, or upon a low-pitched piano in D flat. There are certain keys

preferable to others for certain colours, but I fear that the preference is based not upon acoustic qualities but rather upon a fitness for the hand or voice. We apply the word "colour" as much to tone as the painters apply "tone" to colour, but I hardly think that anybody would speak of C major as representing black, or F major green.

THE STUDENT'S AGE

Starting a Child's Musical Training

At what age should a child begin the study of instrumental music? If my daughter (six years old) is to study the violin should she first spend a few years with the piano, or *vice versa?*

The usual age for a child to begin the study of music is between six and seven years. A pianist hardly needs to learn another instrument to become a well-rounded musician, but violinists, as well as the players of all other instruments, and also vocalists, will be much hampered in their general musical development if they fail to acquire what may be called a speaking acquaintance with the piano.

Age of the Student is Immaterial

I am not longer in my first youth, cannot take more than one hour's lesson a week, and cannot practise more than three hours a day. Would you still advise me to begin the study of the piano?

Provided there is gift and intelligence, the will, and the opportunity to study, age need not stand in your way. If your three hours of study are properly used, and your hour's lesson a week is with a good teacher, you should not become discouraged.

Twenty-five Not Too Late to Begin

Do you think that mastery of the piano is unlikely or impossible when the beginner is twenty-five years of age?

It is neither unlikely nor impossible. Your age will to some degree handicap you, because from purely physical causes the elasticity of the fingers and wrists could be developed much more quickly if you were ten years younger. If, however, you are endowed with strong musical gifts in the abstract you will achieve results superior to those attained by younger people with less talent. In overcoming the difficulties due to a late

beginning you will find great inward satisfaction, and your attainments are bound to be a source of joy to you.

TEACHERS, LESSONS AND METHODS

The Importance of the Right Teacher

I have a son who is very desirous of learning to play the piano. I have been advised that an ordinarily good teacher is good enough to begin with. Others tell me a beginner should get the best teacher possible. Which would you advise? I live in a small town.

The seriousness of your question is aggravated by the statement that you live in a small town, and that there is possibly no teacher of ability to be be found in your town. And yet it is only such a one that I can recommend for your son. For nothing is more dangerous for the development of a talent than a bad foundation. Many people have tried all their lives to rid themselves of the bad habits acquired from an ignorant teacher in the rudimentary stages of their studies, and have failed. I should advise you to try your best to send your boy to some near-by city where there is an excellent teacher.

Nothing But the Best Will Do

Wishing to begin the study of the piano now, in my twenty-fourth year, just for the sake of my great love for music, and knowing not even the notes, is it necessary to go to an expensive teacher at once or would a cheaper teacher do for the beginning?

If music is to be merely a pastime, and you content yourself with a minimum of knowledge, the cheaper teacher will do; but if you aspire to become musical in a better sense, why, by all means, apply to a teacher of the better class. The maxim: "For the beginning this or that is good enough," is one of the most harmful fallacies. What would you think of an architect who says: "For the foundation loam is good enough; we put a sandstone house over it, any way." Remember also, that the road a cheaper teacher has led you to take must usually be retraced when your aspirations rise toward the better in music.

Music Schools and Private Teachers

Shall I take my lessons in a music school or from a private teacher?

Music schools are very good for acquiring a general musical education.

For the higher study of an executive specialty (piano, violin, the voice, etc.) I should naturally prefer private instruction from a specialist, because he can give more attention to each individual pupil than is possible under the wholesale system followed, not by all, but by the majority of music schools. What I should advise would be a combination: General matters — harmony, counterpoint, forms, history, and æsthetics — in a music school; and private lessons for your specialty from a teacher who has an established name as an executive artist. The best music schools have such a man at their head, and in these you find the best combination.

Individual Teacher, or Conservatory?

After taking lessons for five years and a half from a good teacher, would you advise a continuance with the individual teacher or attendance at a college of music or conservatory?

For a general musical education I always recommend a good music school or conservatory. For the study of the piano I think it best to take private lessons from an artist who is experienced

both as an executant and as a teacher. Some music schools have such men on their staff, if not, indeed, at their head.

Where Outside Criticism Is Desirable

Having had twenty months' lessons and having now mastered Etudes by Berens, opus 61, by Heller, opus 47, and Smith's Octave Studies, do you think I am justified in continuing my lessons?

Assuming that you have really "mastered" the works you mention I can only encourage you to continue your lessons; I would, however, advise you to obtain an experienced pianist's criticism in order to assure yourself that your idea of "mastering" is right.

The Sex of the Piano Teacher

Is there any preference as to sex in the question of choosing a piano teacher; in other words, is a woman teacher preferable for any reason for a girl and and a man teacher for a man?

Your question does not admit of generalization from a purely musical point of view. It must be — on this premise — decided by the quality, not by the sex, of the teacher. A good feminine teacher is better than a bad masculine one, and

vice versa. The question of sex does not enter into the matter. Of course, the greater number of eminent teachers are found on the masculine side.

Too Much "Method"

My recently engaged teacher says that the word "method" jars on her nerves. Kindly advise me whether a method is not the best thing for a novice, and, if so, which one?

Your teacher, while possibly a little over-sensitive, is not wrong. America is the most method-ridden country in the world. Most of the methods in vogue contain some good points — about a grain of truth to a ton of mere ballast. Your teacher's utterance makes me think that you were lucky in finding her, and that you have excellent reason to trust in her guidance.

What the Leschetizky Method Is

How does the Leschetizky method rank with other methods, and in what respect does it differ from them?

There are but two methods in all the arts: a good one and a bad one. Since you do not specify with what "other" methods you wish to compare that of

Leschetizky I cannot answer you with definiteness. There are, alas, so many "methods"! But the majority of them are based upon a deliberate disregard for that reverence which is due to great compositions and to the example of their rendition given by great interpreters. I have not studied with Leschetizky, but I think that he believes in a very low position of the hand and a sort of super-energetic tension of the tendons of the arms and hands.

Give Your Teacher a Fair Trial

Has a young pupil, after studying the piano irregularly for two months, tested fairly a teacher's ability?

Of course not! Altogether I do not like the idea of a pupil's testing his teacher's ability, rather the reverse. He may possibly find his teacher unsympathetic, but even this matter he is apt to judge prematurely. In most cases of irregularly attended or poorly prepared lessons the lack of sympathy means nothing more than that the pupil is a trifler and the teacher's honesty of purpose is not to his taste.

Either Trust Your Teacher or Get a New One

I have a "Piano Method," left over from lessons with my first teacher; it was very expensive, and I learned only a few pages of it. We moved to a different city and my new teacher objects to using the book, or, as she says, any such book. I do not know what to do about it, and would thank you for your advice.

When you apply to a teacher for instruction you must, first of all, decide in your own mind whether you have or have not absolute confidence in his ability. If you trust him you must do as you are advised to do; if not, you must apply to another teacher. A book, costing much or little, plays no part in the matter. By what you say of the new teacher, however, I am disposed to think that he is better than the first one.

The Proper Course For a Little Girl

Commencing piano lessons with my seven-year-old daughter, should I devote my efforts to the development of the fingers and hands, or retard such development so as to keep pace with the expansion of the mind?

Your question is interesting. But if

your mind is clear on that point — and it seems to be — that a one-sided development (in this case technical) is dangerous to the "musical" talent of your little daughter, why, then, your little girl is, indeed, "out of danger." Your very question is a credit to your insight.

Frequent Lessons and Shorter

Is it better for a young student to take one hour lesson or two half-hour lessons a week?

Since young students are liable to form bad habits it is essential that they should come under the teacher's eye as frequently as possible. Hence, it is preferable to divide the hour into two equidistant parts.

Number of Lessons Depends on Progress

Which plan is better for a child of eleven or twelve years: to take a one-hour lesson or two half-hour lessons a week?

The child's age is not the determining factor in this matter; it is his musical status.

One Lesson a Week

Is one lesson a week inadequate for a piano student?

It will be sufficient in the more advanced stages of piano study. In the

earlier stages, however, where the danger of forming bad habits is greatest, it is best to bring the pupil under his teacher's eye twice a week at the very least.

Better Not Give the Child "Modified Classics"

What little classics are best for a child after six months' lessons?

There are collections without number of facilitated or simplified arrangements of classic pieces, but I do not altogether approve of them. Let the classics wait until the child is technically — and, above all, mentally — ripe to approach such works as they are written.

Can Music Be Studied in America?

Is it necessary for me to go to Europe to continue my music studies?

If you have very much money to spare, why not? You will see much, also hear much — and some of it not quite so sublime as you anticipated — and, last but not least, you will have "studied abroad." While this slogan still exercises a certain charm upon some people in America, their number is growing less year by year, because the public has begun to understand that the United States affords just as good instruction in

music as Europe does. It has also been found out that to "study abroad" is by no means a guarantee of a triumphant return. Many a young student who went abroad as a lamb returned as a mutton-head. And why should there not be excellent teachers in America by this time? Even if you should insist upon a European teacher you can find many of the best in America. Is it not simpler that one teacher from Europe go to America to teach a hundred students than that a hundred students should make the trip for the sake of one teacher? I should advise you to stay where you are or go to Philadelphia, New York, or Boston, where you can find excellent teachers, native, resident Americans and foreigners. To quote a case in point, let me say that in Berlin I found Godowsky's pupils to be almost exclusively Americans. They came from various sections of America to study with him and with no one else. But during the eighteen years he spent in Chicago they did not seem to want him. Perhaps he was too near by! Why this self-deception? Without mentioning any names I assure you that

there are many teachers in America now who, if they should go to Europe, would draw a host of students after them, and some of these excellent men I know personally. It is high time to put an end to the superstitious belief in "studying abroad."

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Organizing a Musical Club

Please give me the name of a good book on musical history and advise me how to organize and conduct a musical club among my pupils. Also give me a name, please.

You will find the "History of Music," by Baltzell, a serviceable book. As a name for your club I suggest that of the patron saint of music — Saint Cecilia — perhaps, or that of a great composer. Ask the secretaries of a number of musical clubs for their constitutions and by-laws and then adapt these to your locality and circumstances. Make your pupils feel that it is their club and act, yourself, as secretary, if possible.

How to Get Music Published

Please explain how to go about publishing a piece of music, and also give the name of some good publishing houses.

It is very easy to publish a piece of music if the publisher sees any merit in it. Send your piece to any publishing house whose name you find on the title pages of your sheet music. The readers or advisers of the house will report to their chief as to the merit of your piece, and he will then decide and negotiate with you, if his decision is favourable. If he should not care for it he will return your manuscript and you may try some other house. I advise you, however, to obtain the opinion of a good musician before you send your piece to a publisher.

"Playing in Time" and "Playing in Rhythm"

What is the difference between playing "in time" and playing "in rhythm"?

Playing in rhythm refers to the inner life of a composition — to its musical pulsation. Playing in time means the prompt arrival upon those points of repose which are conditioned by the rhythm.

The Student Who Cannot Play Fast Music

I find great difficulty in playing anything that goes quick, though in a more moderate tempo I can play my pieces faultlessly. Every teacher I had promised to develop my speed, but they all

failed. Can you give me a hint how to overcome my difficulty?

Quickness of action, of motion, even of resolution, cannot be acquired by training alone; it must partly be inborn. I assume that your piano-playing is one phase of a general slowness. There is but one remedy for that. You have relied upon your teachers to develop your speed — you should have relied upon your own will-power. Try to will it and to will it often; you will see the ability keep step with the exertions of your will.

"Wonder-Children" as Pianists

My child of five years of age shows signs of great talent for music. He has a keen, true ear, and plays rather well for his age. Does this justify me in hoping that something out of the ordinary will become of him? They say that so-called "wonder-children" never amount to anything in later life.

That "wonder-children" never amount to anything in later life is not borne out by history. If some are disappointments it is either because they astonished by mere executive precocity, instead of

charming by their talent, or because they were ruined by unscrupulous parents or managers who confounded the promise of a future with its realization. But, aside from these few, all great musicians were "wonder-children," whether they became composers, pianists, violinists, 'cellists, or what not. The biographies of our great masters of the past centuries as well as those of more recent times (Mendelssohn, Wagner, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Rubinstein, and all the others), will bear me out in this statement. If your child shows more than mere precocity — if, for instance, he does not merely play in his fifth year what others play in their tenth, but shows qualities of musical superiority — then you may with a fair degree of certainty feel hopeful of a fine musical future for him.

The Value of Going to Concerts

Shall I attend orchestra concerts or shall I give preference to soloists?

By all means attend orchestra and chamber-music concerts! For these will acquaint you with those works which are, after all, of the greatest importance to the student. Besides, you will usually

hear more correct interpretations than from soloists. The latter, with some luminous exceptions, overestimate their own authority and take such unseemly liberties that in many cases you hear more Smith, Jones, or Levy than Beethoven, Schumann, or Chopin. Individuality in a soloist is certainly a great quality, but only if it is tempered by a proper deference to the composer of the work in hand. If you cannot hear a soloist who is capable of sinking his individuality in the thought, mood, and style of the composer he is interpreting — and this is given to only the very greatest — you do far better to prefer to the "individual" renditions of a soloist the "collective" renditions of the orchestra or string quartette. The synthetic nature of the orchestra forestalls the extravagances of so-called individuality and insures, generally speaking, a truthful interpretation. The very worst conductor imaginable cannot do as much harm to a composition as can a mediocre soloist, for an orchestra is a large body and, therefore, not so easily moved and shifted from the path of musical rectitude

as is a single voice or an instrument. A really great soloist is, of course, the finest flower of the garden of applied music, for his touch with the instrument is immediate and he needs no middleman to express the finest shades of his conceptions; while the conductor — and even the best — has to impart his conception (through the baton, facial expression, and gesture) to other people before it can become audible, and on this circuitous route much of the original fervour and ardour may be lost. But there are more good orchestras than great soloists, and hence you are safe in attending orchestra and chamber-music concerts.

Books That Aid the Student Working Alone

Compelled to study without a teacher for two years before I can go to a conservatory, what method should I study for my technique and what pieces?

You fail to say whether you are a beginner or already somewhat advanced. Still, I think it safe to recommend Mason's "Touch and Technique," Sternberg's Etudes, opus 66; and select your pieces from the graded catalogues which any publisher will be glad to send you.

Music as a Profession or as an Avocation

Would you advise a young man with a good foundation to choose music — that is, concertizing — as a career, or should he keep his music as an accomplishment and avocation?

Your distinguishing between music and concertizing gives direction to my reply; that the question was not answered by your own heart before you asked it prompts me to advise music for you as an avocation. The artist's career nowadays is not so simple as it appears to be. Of a thousand capable musicians there is, perhaps, one who attains to a general reputation and fortune. The rest of them, after spending money, time, and toil, give up in despair, and with an embittered disposition take up some other occupation. If you do not depend upon public music-making for a living; if your natural endowments are not of a very unusually high order, and if your entire personality does not imply the exercise of authority over assemblages of people — spiritual authority, I mean — it were better to enjoy your music in the circle of your friends. It is less risky and will, in all probability, give you much greater satisfaction.

How Much You Can Get From Music

When I hear a concert pianist I want to get more from his playing than æsthetic ear enjoyment. Can you give me a little outline of points for which to look that may help me in my piano study?

There is no pleasure or enjoyment from which we can derive more than we bring with us in the way of receptiveness. As you deepen your study of music and gain insight into its forms, contrapuntal work and harmonic beauties you will derive more and more pleasure from listening to a good pianist the deeper your studies go. What their playing reflects of emotional life you will perceive in the exact measure of your own grasp upon life. Art is a medium connecting, like a telegraph, two stations: the sender of a message and the receiver. Both must be pitched equally high to make the communication perfect.

"It is So Much Easier to Read Flats Than Sharps!"

You would confer a favour upon a teacher by solving a problem for her that has puzzled her all her life; why do all pupils prefer flats to sharps? I am not at all sure that I do not, in some

degree, share this preference. Is it a fault of training, or has it any other cause?

Your question is both original and well justified by frequent observation, for it is quite true that people prefer to read flats to sharps. But note it well that the aversion to sharps refers only to the reading, not to the playing. If any one should find it harder to *play* in sharps, say, after knowing the notes well, it would be a purely subjective deception, due to a mental association of the note-picture with the respective sounds. My personal belief is that the aversion to the *reading* of sharps is caused by the comparative complexity of the sign itself, and this leads me to think that the whole matter belongs rather to ophthalmology than to either acoustics or music.

Rubenstein or Liszt — Which the Greater?

As between Liszt and Rubinstein, whom do you consider the greater?

Rubinstein I knew very well (I was his pupil), and have heard him play a great many times. Liszt, who died when I was sixteen years old and had not

appeared in public for some twenty years previously, I never met and never heard. Still, from the descriptions which many of my friends gave me of him, and from the study of his works, I have been able to form a fair idea of his playing and his personality. As a virtuoso I think Liszt stood above Rubinstein, for his playing must have possessed amazing, dazzling qualities. Rubinstein excelled by his sincerity, by his demoniacal, Heaven-storming power of great impassionedness, qualities which with Liszt had passed through the sieve of a superior education and — if you understand how I mean that term — gentlemanly elegance. He was, in the highest meaning of the word, a man of the world; Rubinstein, a world-stormer, with a sovereign disregard for conventionality and for Mrs. Grundy. The principal difference lay in the characters of the two. As musicians, with regard to their natural endowments and ability, they were probably of the same gigantic calibre, such as we would seek in vain at the present time.

As to One Composer—Excluding All Others

If I am deeply interested in Beethoven's music can I not find in him all that there is in music, in both an æsthetic and a technical sense? Is any one's music more profound?

You imagine yourself in an impenetrable stronghold whence, safe from all attacks, you may look upon all composers (except Beethoven) with a patronizing, condescending smile. But you are gravely in error. Life is too rich in experience, too many-sided in its manifestations, to permit any one master, however great, to exhaust its interpretation through his art. If you base your preference for Beethoven upon your sympathies, and if, for this reason, his music satisfies you better than that of any other composer, you are to be complimented upon your good taste. But that gives you no right to contest, for instance, the profoundness of Bach, the æsthetic charm of Chopin, the wonders of Mozart's art, nor the many and various merits of your contemporary composers. The least that one can be charged with who finds the whole of life expressed in any

one composer is one-sidedness, not to speak of the fact that the understanding cannot be very deep for one master if it is closed to all others. One of the chief requirements for true connoisseurship is catholicity of taste.

A Sensible Scheme of Playing for Pleasure

I am fifty-six years old, live in the mountains sixty-five miles from any railroad, alone with my husband, and I have not taken lessons in thirty-five years. Do you think "Pischna" would help me much to regain my former ability to play? If not, what would you advise me to do?

Refrain from all especially technical work. Since your love of music is strong enough to cause you to resume your playing you should take as much pleasure in it as possible and work technically only in the pieces you play — that is, in those places which offer you difficulties. Decide upon a comfortable fingering first, and practise the difficult places separately and slowly until you feel that you can venture to play them in their appropriate speed.

First Learn to Play Simple Things Well

What pieces would you advise me to memorize after Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C-sharp minor and Chopin's A-flat Ballade? These pieces do not appeal to the majority of people, but I enjoy them.

If such a work as Chopin's Ballade in A-flat does not "appeal to the majority" — as you say — the fault cannot lie in the composition, but must be sought in the interpretation. Why not try a few pieces of lesser complexity and play them so perfectly that they do appeal to the majority. Try Chopin's Nocturne, opus 27, No. 2; Schumann's Romanza, opus 28, No. 2; or his "*Traumerei*," or some of the more pretentious "Songs Without Words" by Mendelssohn.

About Starting on a Concert Career

I am twenty-four, have had four years' rigorous work in a conservatory and a partial college training. My technique is adequate for Brahms's Rhapsody in G minor and McDowell's Sonatas. I have good health and am determined not to grow self-satisfied. Is there a place on the concert stage — even if only as an accompanist — for a woman thus equipped?

Any public career must begin by earning the good opinion of others. One's own opinion, however just, is never a criterion. My advice is that you speak to some of the prominent concert agents, whose names and addresses you find in every well-accredited music paper. Play for them. They are usually not connoisseurs by actual knowledge, but they have developed a fine instinct for that which is of use to them, and you are, of course, aware that we must be of use to others before we can be of use to ourselves. If the right "stuff" is in you you will make your way. People of ability always do. That there is room for women on the concert stage is proved by the great array of meritorious women pianists. Especially for accompanying women are in demand — that is, for *good* accompanying. But I would not start out with the idea of accompanying. It seems like going to a commercial school to study be to an "assistant" bookkeeper. Become a fine, all-round musician, a fine pianist, and see what the tide of affairs will bring

you. The proper level for your ability is bound to disclose itself to you.

Accompanist Usually Precedes Soloist at Entering

Should an accompanist precede or follow the soloist on the stage in a concert or recital, and should sex be considered in the matter?

If the soloist be a man the accompanist should precede him on the stage in order to arrange his music, the height of his seat or whatever may be necessary, during which time the soloist salutes the audience. For these reasons it should be the same when the soloist is a woman, but as women are of the feminine persuasion it will, perhaps, look better if the accompanist yields precedence to her.

ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF QUESTIONS

	PAGE
About Starting On a Concert Career. . .	162
Accenting a Mordent in a Sonata . . .	70
Accompanist Usually Precedes Soloist at Entering	164
Action of a Beginner's Piano, The . . .	37
Action of the Little Finger, The . . .	17
Advantage of Legato over Staccato, The . .	22
Affected Movements at the Piano . . .	126
"Afraid to Play Before People" . . .	121
Age of the Student is Immaterial . . .	139
Always Keep in Touch With Bach . . .	81
Art of Accompanying a Soloist, The . .	118
Art of Playing With Feeling, The . . .	124
As to one Composer — Excluding All Others .	160
As to Playing Rubato	100
As to the Bach Fugues	83
Bach's Music Necessary to Good Technique .	80
Bach's Preludes and Fugues	82
Beethoven Sonata with a Pastoral Character, The	84
Beginner in Bach Music, The	80
Best Physical Exercise for the Pianist, The .	131
Best Way to Improve Sight-Reading, The .	117
Best Way to Work Up a Quick Tempo, The .	54
Better Not Give the Child "Modified Classics" .	148

PAGE

Biting the Finger-Nails Spoils the Touch . . 19
Books that Aid the Student Working Alone . 155
Broad-Tipped Fingers Not a Disadvantage . 20

C-Scale Fingering for All Scales, The . . 28
Can Music be Studied in America? . . . 148
Cantabile Passages 7
Charm of Chopin's Touch, The . . . 86
Chopin's Barcarolle 88
Chopin's Works for a Popular Concert . . 88
"Colour" of Various Keys, The . . . 137
Company that One Keeps in Music, The . . 133
Composition Must Fit the Player, The . . 130
Conditions Which Dictate Speed in Playing, The 53
Counting Out Loud 50

Difference Between Conception and Rubato, The 102
Difference Between "Finger Staccato" and Other Kinds, The 22
Difference Between Major and Minor Scales, The 109
Difference in Playing Trills, The . . . 74
Different Conceptions May be Individually Correct 102
Difficulty of Playing Repetition Notes, The. . 34
Disputed Chopin Reading, A 78
Do not Allow the Wrist to Get Stiff . . . 10
Do not Injure the Hand by Stretching It . . 13
Do not Over-Use the Soft Pedal . . . 44
Do not Raise the Piano-Stool too High . . 4
Do not Raise Wrist in Marking a Rest . . 99
Do not Stiffen the Hands in Playing Scales . 9
Do not Use a Piano Extreme in "Action" . . 36

PAGE

Double Sharp Misprinted for Double Flat . . 65

E Sharp and B Sharp and the Double Flat . . 64
Easiest Way to Memorize, The 113
Effect of Double Flats, The 65
Effect of Playing the Same Piece Often, The . 122
Either Trust Your Teacher or Get a New One . 146
Etudes for Advanced Players to Work At . . 94
Exercises for the Beginner to Practise . . 93

Fatiguing the Hand by Stretching . . . 12
Few Sonatas of Beethoven, Well Played, Are Enough, A 85
Fingering the Chromatic Scale . . . 28
Fingers Needed to Play a Mordent, The . . 28
Firm and Crisp Legato Touch, The . . . 24
First Learn to Play Simple Things Well . . 162
Four Ways to Study a Piano Piece . . . 52
Fourth and Fifth Fingers, The . . . 16
Frequent Lessons and Shorter . . . 147

General Rule About the Pedal, A . . . 39
Genuine Piano Hand, The 130
Give Your Teacher a Fair Trial . . . 145
Good Finger Exercises 93
Good Intermediate Books of Etudes . . . 94
Greatest Composers as Pianists, The . . 91

Hearing a Piece Before Studying It . . . 104
Height of the Piano Seat, The 5
Horseback Riding Stiffens the Fingers . . 132
How a Tie and a Slur Differ 63
How Are Syncopated Notes to be Played? . 71

PAGE

How Best to Play the Octaves 29
How Grace Notes Are Played 61
How Long an Accidental Affects a Note . . 64
How Much You Can Get from Music . . 157
How Organ Playing Affects the Pianist . . 26
How Tight to Keep the Piano's Action . . 37
How to Get Music Published 150
How to Hold the Thumb 16
How to Improve the Technique . . . 4
How to Play Passages Marked "Rubato" . 100
How to Use the Pedal 39
How Waltz, Menuet, Mazurka and Polonaise Differ 111

Importance of Studying With the Right Teacher, The 140
Incorrect Position of the Fingers, An . . 8
Individual Teacher or Conservatory? . . 142
In Order to Memorize Easily 115
In Playing a Sonata 75
"International" Piano Pitch, The . . . 136
International Pitch, The 136
Is the Piano the Hardest to Master? . . . 127
"It is So Much Easier to Read Flats Than Sharps!" 157

Kind of Piano Upon Which to Practise, The 35
Kullak's "Method of Octaves" Still Good . . 34

Learning the Art of Accompanying . . . 118
Learning to Accompany at Sight . . . 117
Learning to Modulate 107

PAGE

Let Your Ear Guide Your Pedalling . 41
Loose Wrist, The 9

Masters Cannot be Studied In Order . . 90
Meaning and Use of "Motif," The . . . 68
Meaning of Solfeggio, The 74
Meaning of "Toccata," The 111
Memorizing Quickly and Forgetting as Readily . 115
Metronome Markings, The 57
Metronome Markings May Better be Ignored . 59
Modern Piano Music 92
Mood and Tempo in the A Flat Impromptu . 87
More Technique the More Practice, The . . 3
Morning is the Best Time to Practise . . 46
Morning Practice on the Piano, The . . . 45
Music as a Profession or as an Avocation . . 156
Music Schools and Private Teachers . . . 141

No Necessity to Watch the Fingers . . . 19
Not Playing the Two Hands at Once. . . 25
Nothing But the Best Will Do 141
Number of Lessons Depends on Progress, The . 147

Old Problem of Duple Time against Triple, The 98
Omitting One Note in a Chord . . . 89
Once More the "Soft" Pedal 44
One Lesson a Week 147
Only Kind of Practice Worth While, The . 47
Order of Studying Beethoven's Sonatas . . 83
Organ Playing and the Piano Touch . . 26
Organizing a Musical Club 150

PAGE

Perfect Rubato the Result of Momentary Impulse 101
Personal Element and the Metronome, The . 58
Pianist Who Fails to Express Herself, The . . 123
Piano Study for Conductor and Composer . . 128
Play Chords With a Loose Arm . . . 11
Playing Duple Time Against Triple . . . 96
Playing from Memory is Indispensable . . 112
"Playing in Time" and "Playing in Rhythm" . 151
Playing of Double Thirds, The . . . 35
Playing of Slurred Notes, The 62
Playing On a Dumb Piano 38
Playing the "Melody in F" 79
Playing the "Spring Song" too Fast . . 77
Playing with Cold Hands 49
Point in Playing the "Moonlight Sonata," A . 76
Position of Auxiliary Note in a Trill . . . 72
Position of the Turn over a Note, The . . 71
Position of the Wrist, The 10
Practising Eight Hours Instead of Four . . 48
Practising the Two Parts Separately . . . 52
Premature Fatigue in the Arms . . . 33
Problem of Transposing at Sight, The . . 119
Proper Course for a Little Girl, The . . . 146

Rapid Octaves 30
Real Meaning of Speed Terms, The . . . 60
Relation of Harmony to Piano Playing, The . 105
Rests Used under or over Notes . . . 62
Results Count, Not the Methods, The . . 6
Rolled Chord Marked "Secco," A . . . 70
Rubinstein or Liszt — Which is the Greater? . 158
Rule for Selecting the Speed, A . . . 60

PAGE

Safe Way of Stretching the Small Hand, A . . 13
Sensible Scheme of Playing for Pleasure, A . . 161
Sex of the Piano Teacher, The 143
Should Piano Students Try to Compose? . . 108
Slurs and Accents Not Related . . . 63
Small Notes under Large Ones . . . 70
Some Pieces for a Girl of Fourteen . . . 75
Speed and Smoothness in Trilling . . . 73
Staffs are Independent of Each Other, The . . 66
Starting a Child's Musical Training . . . 138
Stiff Wrists in Playing Octaves . . . 33
Student Who Cannot Play Fast Music, The . 151
Student Who Wants to Compose, The . . 108
Student with a Fondness for the Pedal, The . 42
Study of Mendelssohn, The 85
Study of Operatic Transcriptions, The . . 91
Study of the Scales, The 51
Study of the Scales is very Important, The . 50
Studying Counterpoint by One's Self . . 107

Take a Month's Rest Every Year . . . 56
Taking Liberties With the Tempo . . . 89
"Tenuto" Dash and Its Effect, The . . . 69
Text-books on Harmony 106
There Are Dangers in Using a Metronome . . 59
There Is Only One Minor Scale . . . 109
Tied Staccato Notes 69
Tilt of the Hand in Playing Scales, The . . 6
Time to Devote to Technical Exercises . . 47
To Ga n Facility in Sight-Reading . . . 117
To Keep Errors from Creeping in . . . 116
To Play a Glissando Passage 29
To Prevent Sore Finger-tips After Playing . 20

PAGE

To Produce a Softer Tone 43
To Produce Good Legato 23
To Strengthen the Weak Finger, Use It . . 18
To Work up a Fast Tempo 53
Too Much "Method" 144
Trill Begins on the Melodic Note, A . . 72
Twenty-five Not Too Late to Begin . . . 139
Two Hands Playing Difficult Rhythms, The . 97

Universal System of Marking Fingering, The . 27
Use of the Pedal for Colouring, The . . . 39
Use Pedal With Caution In Playing Bach . . 41
Using the Two Pedals at Once . . . 43

Value of Clementi's "Gradus" To-day, The . 95
Value and Correct Practice of Phrasing, The . 98
Value of Going to Concerts, The . . 153
Value of Heller's Studies, The 93

Watch Your Breathing 55
Weak Fingers of the Left Hand, The . . 18
Well-Tempered Piano Scale, The . . . 137
What a Dot May Mean 77
What a Double Dot Means 62
What Does "Technique" Mean? . . . 3
What Is the Best of Chopin? 86
What Is the Difference Between the Major and Minor Scales? 110
"What Is the Matter with My Scales?" . . 14
What the Leschetizky Method Is . . . 144
What the Object of Study Should Be . . 135
What to Do with an Unemployed Hand . . 21
When an Accidental Is in Parentheses . . 66

PAGE

When Playing Octaves 31
When Reading Over a New Piece . . . 51
When the Fingers Seem Weak 18
When to Keep Away from the Piano . . 132
When to Play for People 120
When Tremolo Proves Unduly Fatiguing . . 11
When Two Fingers Have the Same Note . . 79
Where Outside Criticism Is Desirable . . 143
Where the Accent Should Be Placed . . . 78
Which Fingers Demand Most Attention? . . 16
Which Should Come First — Conception or Technique? 103
Why Rag-time Is Injurious 134
Why So Many Different Keys? . . . 105
Why the Pianist Should Study Harmony . . 104
Why the Piano Is So Popular 128
Why Two Names for the "Same" Key? . . 67
"Wonder Children" as Pianists . . . 152
Wrist Staccato at a High Tempo . . . 21
Wrist Stroke In Long Octave Passages . . 32

INDEX

A flat, key of, 67.
  Impromptu in, 78, 87.
  Chopin's Ballade in, 162.
A sharp, key of, 67.
  difference between, and B flat, 137.
Accent, where the, should be placed, 78.
Accenting a mordent, 70.
Accents, slurs and, not related, 63.
Accidental, how long an, affects a note, 64.
  when an, is in parentheses, 66.
Accompaniment, 118.
Accompaniments, in left-hand waltz, 17.
Accompanist, 118, 119, 164.
Accompanying, at sight, 117.
  a soloist, 118.
  the art of, 118.
Action, of the wrist, 9.
  of the arm, 11.
  of the little finger, 17.
  a piano extreme in, 36.
  how tight to keep the piano's, 37.
  of a beginner's piano, 37.
  a too heavy, 38.
  too light an, 38.
Adagio, 60.
Advantage, of legato over staccato, 22.
  of universal fingering, 27.
Affected movements at the piano, 126.
Age, and physical development of the beginner, 138, 139.
Age of the student, immaterial, 139.
Aid, books that, the student working alone, 155.
Allegretto grazioso, 77.
Allegro, 60.
America, can music be studied in, 148.
"American" fingering, 27.
Andante, 60.
Appassionata, the last movement of the, 76.
Appoggiatura, 72.
Arm, action of the, 11.
  play chords with a loose, 11.
Arms, premature fatigue in the, 33.
Arpeggio, 3, 9.
Art, of accompanying, the, 118.
  the canons of, 125.
Attention, which fingers demand most, 16.
Auber, 136.
Auxiliary, position of, note in a trill, 72.
Average, speed, 59.
  tempo, 60.
Avocation, music as a profession or as an, 156.

B flat minor, Chopin's Prelude in, 95.
B sharp, 64, 65.
Bach, use pedal with caution in playing, 41.
  the beginner in, music, 80.
  in touch with, 81.
Bach, Philipp Emanuel, 88.

Bach's, music, 80, 81.
preludes, 67, 82.
fugues, 67, 82, 83.
Bad music, 133.
Baermann, Carl, 94.
Ballade, Chopin's, in A flat, 162.
Baltzell, "History of Music," by, 150.
Barcarolle, Chopin's, 88.
Beethoven, the sonatas of, 83, 85.
Beethoven's Sonatina, opus 49, 59.
Fifth Symphony, 69.
Sonata Pathètique, 70.
"Moonlight Sonata," 76.
sonatas, 83.
order of studying, sonatas, 83.
Sonata, opus 28, 84.
style, 85.
first and last sonatas, 90.
Beginner's, the action of a, piano, 37.
Bendel's "Zephyr," 53.
Berceuse, Chopin's, opus 57, 86.
Berens, 95, 143.
Berlin, 118.
Berlioz, 91, 136.
Best, how to play the octaves, 29.
morning is the, time to practise, 46.
way to work up a quick tempo, 54.
what is the, of Chopin, 86.
the, book of instruction for a beginner, 93.
the, way to improve sight-reading, 117.
the, piano hand, 130.
the, physical exercise for the pianist, 131.
nothing but the, will do, 141.
Biting the finger-nails, 19.
Blumenstück, Schumann's, 79.
"Blurring," 23.
Body, general position of the, 4.
Books, of Etudes, 93, 94.
that aid the student working alone, 155.
Brahms, 162.
Breathing, 55.
Broad-tipped fingers, 20.
Bulow, 17.
Büssler, 106.

C flat, 67.
C sharp, key of, 67.
C sharp major, Bach's fugue in, 83.
C sharp minor movement, the, 58.
Cantabile passages, 7.
Cantata, 112.
Chaminade, Toccata by, 111.
Chaminade's "Air de Ballet," No. 1, 70.
Chopin, Polonaise, opus 53, 74.
a disputed, reading, 78.
Life of, 86.
the best of, 86.
Etude by, 94.
Etudes in C minor, 95.
Chopin's works, 23, 79.
Prelude, No. 15, 58.
Valse, opus 42, 61.
Polonaise, opus 53, 74.
Polonaise, opus 26, No. 1, 77.
Nocturne in F sharp, 78.
Impromptu in A flat, opus 29, 78, 87.
charm of, touch, 86.
Chants Polonais, 88.
Fantasy Impromptu, 88, 97.
Barcarolle, 88.
Nocturne, opus 27, No. 2, 88, 162.

Chopin's works for a popular concert, 88.
Ballade in A flat, 162.
Chord, rolled, marked "secco," 70.
in the Waltz in E minor, 89.
Chords, play, with a loose arm, 11.
Chromatic,
the, scale 28.
thirds, 35.
accidental, signs, 66, 67.
Classics, "modified," 148.
Clementi, 81.
Clementi's "Gradus and Parnassum," 95.
Sonatina, opus 37, 96.
"Colour," of various keys, 137.
Colouring, 39, 44, 137.
Composer, piano-study for, 128.
as to one, 160.
Composers, the greatest, as pianists, 91.
Composition, 108, 130.
Conception, difference between, and rubato, 102.
Conceptions, different, 102.
Concert, Chopin's works for a popular, 88.
etudes, 94.
work, 156.
career, 162.
Concerto, the Grieg, 35.
Concerts, the value of going to, 153.
Conservatory, individual teacher or, 142.
Conductor, piano-study for, 128.
Correct practice of phrasing, 98.
Counterpoint, studying, 107, 142.
Cramer Etudes, the, 17, 45.
C-scale fingering, 28.
Counterpoint, studying, by one's self, 107.
Counting, 50.
Course, proper, for a little girl, 146.
Criticism, where outside, is desirable, 143.
Curved fingers, 6, 7.
Czerny, 45, 81.

D flat, key of, 67.
arrangement of Bach's Fugues, 83.
Damper pedal, the, 43.
Dance, music, 134.
Liszt's, of the Gnomes, 58.
Dangers in using a metronome, 59.
Dash, "tenuto," and its effect, 69.
Diatonic, thirds, 35.
sequel, 73.
Different, conceptions, 102.
rhythms, 97.
keys, 105.
Difference, between "finger staccato" and other kinds, 22.
in playing trills, 74.
between conception and rubato, 102.
between major and minor scales, 109.
Difficulty of playing repetition notes, 34.
Doppio movement, in Chopin's Nocturne in F sharp, 78.
Dot, double, 62.
what a, may mean, 77.
Double notes, 35.
thirds, 35.
dot, 62.
flat, 64, 65.
flats, 65.
sharp, 65.

Dumb piano, playing on a 38.
Duple time, 96, 98.

E minor, Waltz in, 89.
E sharp, 64.
Ear, let your, guide your pedalling, 41.
Easiest way to memorize, 113.
Edition, Peters's, of Chopin, 79.
Edition, Steingräber, of Beethoven, 84.
Education, general musical, 141.
Element, personal, and the metronome, 58.
"English" fingering, 27.
Erlking, Liszt arrangement of the, 32.
Errors, to keep, from creeping in, 116.
Ethical, 135.
Etudes, Cramer, 17, 45.
octave, 30.
for advanced players, 94.
good intermediate books of, 94.
by Ruthardt, 94.
twelve, for technique and expression, 94.
concert, 94.
by Baermann, 94.
of Chopin, 95.
by Kessler, 95.
by Berens, 95, 143.
by Heller, 143.
Sternberg's, 155.
Example, force of, 104.
Exercise, best physical, 131.
Exercises, stretching, 12, 13.
technical, 47.
for the beginner, 93.
good finger, 93.

F major, key of,
F, Melody in, 79.
F minor, Chopin's Ballades in, 86.
F sharp, key of, 67.
Chopin's Nocturne in, 78.
Fantastic Fairy Tales, 92.
Fantasy Impromptu, Chopin's, 88, 97.
Fatigue, premature, in the arms, 33.
Faulty touch, 8, 43.
Fifth Symphony, Beethoven's, 69.
Finger, the middle, 16.
technique, 16.
the little, 17.
the weak, 18.
touch, 19.
staccato, 22.
exercises, 93.
Fingering, English, 27.
universal, 27.
American, 27.
the chromatic scale, 28.
C-scale, 28.
Finger-nails, biting the, 19.
Fingers, position of, 6.
the other, 16.
fourth and fifth, 16.
weak, 18.
broad-tipped, 20.
needed to play a mordent, 28.
Finger-stroke, high, 7, 23, 24.
Finger-tips, sore, 20.
"wiping" the keys with the, 35.
Firm legato touch, 24.
Flat, double, 65.
Flats, double, 65.
Fugue, definition of a, 82.
Fugues, Bach's, 82.

G flat, key of, 67.
G minor,
Chopin's Ballade in, 86.
Brahms's Rhapsody in, 162.

Gavotte in A, the, 44.
General, technique, 3.
rule about the pedal, 39.
musical education, 141.
Glissando, the, 29.
to play a, passage, 29.
Gluck-Brahms, 44.
Godowsky, transcriptions by, 23.
Godowsky's pupils, 149.
Going to concerts, value of, 153.
Grace notes, 61.
"Gradus ad Parnassum," Clementi's, 95.
Grieg Concerto, the, 35.

Halvéy, 136.
Hand, position of, 6.
stretching the, 12.
small, 13.
unemployed, the, 21.
genuine piano, 130.
Hands, two at once, 25.
playing with cold, 49.
Harmonic, clarity, 41.
turns, 105.
Harmony, study of, 104.
relation of, to piano-playing, 105.
textbooks on, 106.
Hadyn, 75.
Heller, etudes by, 143.
Heller's studies, value of, 93.
opus 154, 94.
"History of Music," 150.

Importance of the right teacher, 140.
Impromptu, Chopin's, in A flat, 78.
Chopin's Fantasy, opus 66, 88, 97.
Instrument, the, 35.
Intermediate, good, books of etudes, 94.
International piano pitch, 136.
International pitch, 136.

Key, two names for the same, 67.
Keys, why so many different, 105.
"colour" of various, 137.
Kuhlau Sonatinas, 75.
Kullak's, Octave School, 31.
"Method of Octaves," 34.

Learning, to modulate, 107.
to accompany at sight, 117.
the art of accompanying, 118.
Legato, 22, 23.
advantage of, 22.
touch, 24.
meaning of, 24.
Leschetizky method, the, 144.
Lessons, teachers, and methods, 140.
number of, depends on progress, 147.
frequent, and shorter, 147.
Liadow, "Music Box" by, 92.
"Life of Chopin," the, 86.
"Limping," 25.
Liszt, 130, 158.
Liszt's, Dance of the Gnomes, 58.
transcription of Chants Polonais, 88.
Little finger, action of the, 17.
Loud counting, 50.

MacDowell, Sonatas, 162.
Major, difference between, and minor scales, 109, 110.
Marking a rest, in, 99.
Marks and Nomenclature, 57.
Mason's "Touch and Technique, 155.

Master's cannot be studied in order, 90.
Mazurka, 111.
Mazurkas, Chopin's, 86.
Melody in F, the, 79.
Memorize, easiest way to, 113.
in order to, easily, 115.
Memory, playing from, 112.
the, 112.
Mendelssohn, the study of, 85.
Mendelssohn's "Spring Song," 77.
Menuet, 111.
Method, too much, 144.
Leschetizky, 144.
Methods, teachers, lessons and, 140.
Metronome, markings, 57, 59.
personal element and the, 58.
dangers in using a, 59.
Meyerbeer, 136.
Minor, difference between major and, scales, 109.
only one, scale, 109.
Miscellaneous questions, 150.
"Modified Classics," 148.
Modulate, learning to, 107.
Mood and tempo in the A flat Impromptu, 87.
"Moonlight Sonata," the, 76.
Mordent, fingers needed to play a, 28.
accenting a, in a sonata, 70.
Morning practice on the piano, 45.
Moscheles, Etudes by, 94.
Motif, meaning and use of, 68.
"Moto perpetuo," 112.
Mozart, 46, 75.
Mozart's art, 160.
Music, the beginner in Bach, 80.
modern piano, 92.
bad, 133.
the company that one keeps in, 133.
can, be studied in America, 148.
how to get, published, 150.
as a profession, 156.
how much you can get from, 157.
"Music Box," the 92.
Music schools and private teachers, 141.

Nocturne, Chopin's, in F sharp, 78.
opus 27, No. 2, 88, 162.
Nocturnes, Chopin's, 86.
Nomenclature, marks and, 57.
Note, auxiliary, 72.
when two fingers have the same, 79.
Notes repetition, 34.
double, 35.
slurred, 62.
tied staccato, 69.
small, under large ones, 70.
syncopated, 71.

Object of study, 135.
Octave, chords, 11.
Kullak's, School, 31.
in extended, playing, 32.
passages, 32.
Octaves, 29.
rapid, 30.
when playing, 31.
wrist, 31, 32.
arm, 31.
stiff wrists in playing, 33.
Operatic transcriptions, 91.
Order of studying Beethoven's Sonatas, 83.
Other fingers, the, 16.

Organ, touch, 26.
playing, 26.

Pachulski, 92.
Pedal, a general rule about the, 39.
how to use the, 39.
use of the, for colouring, 39.
use, with caution in playing Bach, 41.
the "soft," 43, 44.
a constant use of the soft, 45.
Pedalling, let your ear guide your, 41.
Pedals, the, 39.
using the two, at once, 43.
"Perpetuum Mobile," Weber's, 112.
Peters's Edition, 79, 82.
Phrasing, value and correct practice of, 98.
Physical exercise, best, for the pianist, 131.
Pianists, the greatest composers as, 91.
"wonder-children" as, 152.
Pianissimo touch, the, 44.
Piano, height of the, seat, 5.
touch, 26.
kind of, upon which to practise, 35.
extreme in action, 36.
action of a beginner's, 37.
playing on a dumb, 38.
affected movements at the, 126.
about the, *per se*, 127.
genuine, hand, 130.
when to keep away from the, 132.
'Piano Playing," 35.
"Pischna," exercises of, 93, 161.
Pitch, international, 136.
Pitch and kindred matters, 136.
international piano, 136.
Play for people, when to, 120.
Playing for pleasure, 161.
Polonaise, Chopin, opus 53, 74.
Chopin, opus 26, No. 1, 77.
Polonaises, Chopin's, 86.
Polyrythms, 96.
Popular concert, Chopin's works for a, 88.
Position, of the body, 4.
of the hand, 6.
of the fingers, 6, 8.
of the wrist, 10.
of the thumb, 16.
of the turn over a note, 71.
of auxiliary note in a trill, 72.
Practice, morning, on the piano, 45.
the only kind of, worth while, 47.
of phrasing, 98.
of constructing, 108.
Practise, kind of a piano upon which to, 35.
exercises for the beginner to, 93.
Practising, eight hours instead of four, 48.
the two parts separately, 52.
Precision, 25.
Prelude, the B flat minor, 95.
in C sharp minor, 162
Preludes, Bach's, 82.
Chopin's, 86.
Private teachers, 141.
Profession, music as a, 156.

Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor, 162.
Rag-time, why, is injurious, 134.

Repetition, technique, 34.
notes, 34.
Rests used under or over notes, 62.
Rhapsody, Brahms's, in G minor, 162.
Rhythm, accents relate to 62.
playing in, 151.
Richter, E. F., 106.
Romanza, Schumann's, 162.
Rossini, 136.
Rubato, as to playing, 100.
passages marked, 100.
difference between conception and, 102.
Rubinstein, 158.
Rubinstein's "Melody in F," 79.
Russian piano music, 53.
Ruthardt, "Etudes" by, 94.

Scale, fingering the chromatic, 28.
only one minor, 109.
the well-tempered piano, 137.
Scale playing, in, 16.
Scales, tilt of the hand in playing the, 6.
the practising of, 14, 51.
the study of the, 50, 51.
Scherzo, Chopin's, opus 31, 88.
Schubert-Liszt's "Auf dem Wasser zu singern," 53.
Schumann's "Blumenstuck," 79.
Romanza, opus 28, No. 2, 162.
"Traumerei," 162.
"Secco," a rolled chord marked, 70.
Seeling, Hans, 94.
Sex of the teacher, 143.
Sight-reading, 117.
Slur, how a tie and a, differ, 63.
Slurred notes, the playing of, 62.
Slurs, 63.
Smith's Octave Studies, 143.
Solfeggio, meaning of, 74.
Soloist, 118, 164.
Sonata, accenting a mordent in a, 70.
in playing a, 75.
Moonlight, 76.
Beethoven, with a pastoral character, 84.
meaning of, 112.
Sonatina, Beethoven's, 59.
Sonatas of Beethoven, the, 83, 85.
"Songs without Words," Mendelssohn's, 86, 162.
Speed, gradual increase of, 54.
average, 59.
meaning of, terms, 60.
rule for selecting the, 60.
and smoothness in trilling, 73.
"Spring Song," the, 77.
Staccato, wrist, at a high tempo, 21.
finger, 22.
arm, 22.
Staffs, the, 66.
Starting, about, on a concert career, 162.
Steingräber Edition of Beethoven's Sonatas, 84.
Sternberg's Etudes, opus 66, 155.
Stretching, 12, 13.
Student, age of, immaterial, 139.
books that aid the, working alone, 155.
Students, piano, 108.
Studies, Heller's, 93.
Study, object of, 135.

Studying, importance of, with the right teacher, 140.
Syncopated notes, 71.
System, universal, of fingering, 27.

Teachers, lessons, and methods, 140.
Technical, exercises, 47.
work, 18, 45, 46.
studies, 46.
results, 48.
Technique, a generic term, 3.
how to improve the, 4.
a precise finger, 16.
of the fingers, 22.
repetition, 34.
a "musical," 38.
Tempo, wrist staccato at a high, 21.
to work up a fast, 53, 54.
average, 60.
in the A flat Impromptu, 87.
taking liberties with the, 89.
rubato, 100, 101.
"Tenuto" dash, the, 69.
Textbooks on harmony, 106.
Thalberg, 91, 92.
Theory, 104.
Thirds, double, 35.
diatonic, 35.
chromatic, 35.
Thomas, Ambroise, 136.
Thumb, the, 14.
how to hold the, 16.
Tie, a, 63.
Time, duple, against triple, 96, 98.
playing in, 151.
Toccata, meaning of, 111.
Touch, faulty, 8, 43.
finger, 19, 50.
biting the finger-nails spoils the, 19.
legato, 24, 63.
crisp legato, 24.
piano, 26.
organ, 26.
repetition, 34.
charm of Chopin's, 86.
and Technique, 155.
Training, a child's musical, 138.
Transcriptions, study of operatic, 91.
Transposing at sight, 119.
Tremolo, 11.
Trill, position of auxiliary note in a, 72.
Trills, on the melodic note, 72.
extended, 72.
difference in playing, 74.
Triple time, 96, 98.
"Twelve Etudes for Technique and Expression," 94.

Universal system of marking fingering, 27.

Valse, Chopin's, opus 42, 61.
opus 64, No. 2, 88.

Waltz, a chord in the, in E minor, 89.
Waltzes, Chopin's, 86.
Weak fingers, 18.
Weber's "Storm," 41.
pianos of, time, 41.
"Perpetuum Mobile," 112.
"Wonder-children" as pianists, 152.
Wrist, action of the, 9.
the loose, 9.
position of the, 10.
stiffness in the, 10.
octaves, 31, 32.
stroke in long octave passages, 32.